MINUTES

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1881.

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SPECIAL CONTRIBUTORS. — We number as contributors most of our leading and active pastors, especially in the Interior and Northwest; many of the officers of the Theological Seminaries and Colleges; many of the most eminent professional writers, men and women, in all parts of the land; and not a few of the reformers, statesmen and publicists.

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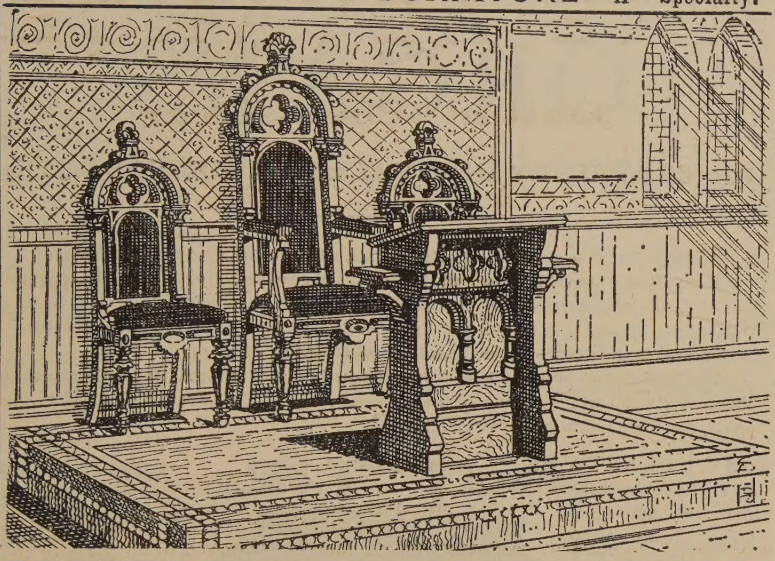

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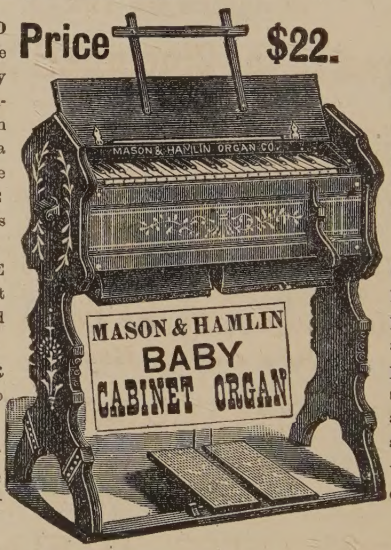
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OF THE

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES

OF THE

UNITED STATES,

AT THE FOURTH SESSION, HELD IN ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI,

NOVEMBER 11–15, 1880.

WITH THE REPORTS AND PAPERS.

BOSTON:
CONGREGATIONAL PUBLISHING SOCIETY.
1880.

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NOTE.

FOR "Officers and Committees" of the National Council, see page 210.

The reports of committees in this volume are printed precisely as made, and not as affected by any action of the Council.

The Statistics of the Ministers and Churches will be found in the *Year-Book* for 1881. Both these works are issued by direction of the National Council, and, by the same instructions, a copy of each is mailed to each church, and another to each minister.

Notice of any errors in the *Year-Book*, or any suggestions of improvement, will be gladly received by the secretary of the Council, in behalf of the publishing committee.

MINUTES.

The National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States convened, for its fourth session, in Pilgrim Church, in St. Louis, Mo., at 10.30 a. m., Thursday, November 11, 1880, and was called to order by Dea. Amos C. Barstow, of Rhode Island, chairman of the provisional committee, acting as temporary moderator, who made a brief address.

Tellers.

Rev. John G. Davenport, of Connecticut; Rev. Charles H. Bissell, of Iowa; Rev. S. V. S. Fisher, of Wisconsin; Rev. Winfield S. Hawkes, of Massachusetts; Rev. E. Frank Howe, of Massachusetts; and Dea. Edward I. Thomas, of Massachusetts, were appointed tellers.

Organization.

The credentials of delegates were collected, and their names were read by the secretary.

It was *voted*, That, in the opinion of the Council, honorary members are not eligible to the office of moderator.

From nominations without remark, Rev. Henry M. Dexter, D. D., of Massachusetts, was chosen moderator, and was conducted to the chair by Rev. Samuel Wolcott, D. D., of Ohio, and Rev. Henry M. Storrs, D. D., of New York; Rev. Julian M. Sturtevant, Jr., D. D., of Iowa, and Rev. John D. Smith, of Alabama, were chosen assistant moderators; and Rev. Jesse L. Fonda, of Minnesota, and Rev. Warren F. Day, of Michigan, were chosen assistant registrars.

Committees.

The following committees, named by the moderator, were appointed:—

On credentials. — Rev. Malcolm McG. Dana, D. D., of Minnesota; Rev. Henry S. DeForest, of Alabama; Rev. Winfield S. Hawkes, of Massachusetts; Rev. George W. Nelson, of Wisconsin; Rev. R. Davenport Parker, of Kansas; Rev. Clarence S. Sargent, of Maine; John Meyer, of Iowa.

On business. — Rev. Leander T. Chamberlain, D. D., of Con-

necticut; Rev. Lyman Abbott, D. D., of New York; Rev. Constans L. Goodell, D. D., of Missouri; Rev. George B. Spalding, D. D., of New Hampshire; Charles B. Lines, of Kansas; Josiah L. Pickard, LL. D., of Iowa; Dea Edward I. Thomas, of Massachusetts.

MEMBERS.

The roll reported by the committee on credentials, when completed, was as follows: —

DELEGATES FROM STATE AND LOCAL BODIES OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES:

Alabama.

General Conference. — Rev. Henry S. DeForest, Talladega; Rev. John D. Smith, Shelby Iron Works.

California.

General Association. — Rev. Israel E. Dwinell, D. D., Sacramento.

Colorado.

Association. — Rev. Abel K. Packard, Greeley; Rev. Harlan P. Roberts, Colorado Springs; Rev. Clarendon M. Sanders, Cheyenne, Dakota; Miss Amanda R. Bell, Denver.

Connecticut.

General Conference. — Rev. Joseph Anderson, D. D., Waterbury; Rev. James B. Bonar, New Milford; Rev. Leavitt H. Hallock, West Winsted; Rev. George L. Walker, D. D., Hartford; Dea. Benjamin Douglas, Middletown; Henry E. Sawyer, New Britain.

Fairfield East Consociation. — Rev. John G. Davenport, Bridgeport.

Fairfield South-West Conference. — Rev. Benjamin F. Bradford, Darien.

Fairfield West Consociation. — Rev. Samuel J. M. Merwin, Wilton.

Hartford Conference. — Rev. James B. Gregg, Hartford.

Hartford South Conference. — Rev. Elias H. Richardson, D. D., New Britain.

Litchfield North-East Conference. — Rev Lavalette Perrin, D. D., Wolcottville.

Litchfield South Consociation. — Rev. Allan McLean, Litchfield; Dea. George M. Woodruff, Litchfield.

Middlesex Conference. — Rev. Charles J. Hill, Middletown; John O. Couch, Middlefield

New Haven East Consociation. — Rev. William T. Reynolds, North Haven; Dea. Lucius Rowe, Fair Haven.

New Haven West Conference. — Rev. Edward G. Beckwith, D. D., Waterbury; Rev. Stephen R. Dennen, D. D., New Haven; Rev. Herbert M. Tenney, Wallingford; Dea. Charles Benedict, Waterbury.

Tolland Conference. — Rev. Josiah A. Mack, Gilead; Dea. Charles D. Talcott, Talcottville.

Windham Conference. — Rev. Edwin S. Beard, Brooklyn.

DAKOTA TERRITORY.

Association. — Rev. Stewart Sheldon, Yankton; Rev. Joseph Ward, Yankton.

GEORGIA.

Conference. — Rev. Stanley E. Lathrop, Macon; Rev. Joseph E. Roy, D. D., Atlanta.

ILLINOIS.

General Association. — Rev. Frederick A. Noble, D. D., Chicago; Rev. Julian M. Sturtevant, D. D., LL. D., Jacksonville; B. C. Beach, Champaign; Isaac M. Camp, Chicago.

Aurora Association. — Rev. Dexter D. Hill, Aurora; Rev. H. DeForest Wiard, Earlville.

Bureau Association. — Rev. Jean Fred. Loba, Kewanee; F. W. Waller, Princeton.

Central Association. — Rev. John A. Allen, Chenoa; Rev. George L. Roberts, Tremont.

Central East Association. — Rev. William J. Clark, Oakalla; Rev. James W. West, Onarga.

Central West Association. — Rev. Martin S. Hall, Lawn Ridge; Rev. Asahel A. Stevens, Peoria; Dea. Amos B. Thomas, Farmington.

Chicago Association. — Rev. Simeon Gilbert, Chicago; Rev. William A. Lloyd, Ravenswood; James W. Scoville, Oak Park.

Elgin Association. — Rev. Harry W. George, Creston; Marshall C. Hazard, Chicago.

Fox River Association. — Rev. Albert Ethridge, Normal; Dea. Mason Bull, Ottawa.

Quincy Association. — Rev. William W. Rose, Pittsfield; J. K. Scarborough, Payson.

Rockford Association. — Rev. Frank P. Woodbury, Rockford.

Rock River Association. — Rev. Almer Harper, Port Byron; John Deere, Moline.

Southern Association. — Rev. George C. Adams, Alton; Rev. Mason Grosvenor, D. D, Jacksonville.

INDIANA.

General Association. — De Alva S. Alexander, Indianapolis.

Northern Association. — Rev. M. W. Darling, Elkhart.

Central Association. — Rev. Nathaniel A. Hyde, D. D., Indianapolis; Rev. Luman P. Rose, Indianapolis.

Evangelical Association of Southern Indiana. — Rev. Saywell Perkins, Grayville.

INDIAN TERRITORY.

Red River Association. — Rev. Edward Morris, Caddo.

IOWA.

General Association. — Rev. Alvah L. Frisbie, Des Moines; Josiah L. Pickard, LL. D., Iowa City; Rev. Alden B. Robbins, D. D., Muscatine.

Central Association. — Rev. Calvin C. Adams, Montour; Rev. Charles H. Bissell, Traer.

Council Bluffs Association. — Rev. William M. Brooks, D. D., Tabor; Rev. Cyrus Hamlin, Council Bluffs; E. C. Bosbyshell, Glenwood.

Davenport Association. — Rev. William L. Bray, Clinton; Dea. Henry Hoover, Muscatine.

Des Moines River Association. — Rev. James E. Snowden, Oskaloosa; Dea. Amos Steckel, Bloomfield.

Dubuque Association. — Rev. William A. Waterman, Marion; Rev. Clayton Welles, Waterloo.

Garnaville Association. — Rev. Charles C. Cragin, McGregor.

Grinnell Association. — Rev. Julian M. Sturtevant, Jr., D. D., Grinnell; John Meyer, Newton.

Mitchell Association. — Rev. William H. Atkinson, Orchard.

North-Western Association. — Rev. Jesse Rogers.

Sioux Association. — Rev. Arthur E. Arnold, Le Mars; Rev. John R. Chalmers.

KANSAS.

General Association. — Rev. Albert M. Richardson, Lawrence; Charles B. Lines, Wabaunsee.

Central Association. — Rev. Lauren Armsby, Council Grove; Rev. R. Davenport Parker, Manhattan.

Eastern Association. — Rev. James G. Dougherty, Ottawa; Rev. Leverett W. Spring, Lawrence; Rev. Henry E. Woodcock, Tonganoxie.

Northern Association. — Rev. Daniel P. Kloss, Highland.

North-Western Association. — Rev. Richard B. Foster, Osborne; Rev. Floyd E Sherman, Stockton.

Southern Association. — Rev. Richard Cordley, D. D., Emporia; Rev. James Lau Bach, Burlington; Dea. Edwin Tucker, Eureka.

South-Western Association — Rev. Samuel Dilley, Reno Centre; Rev. Henry Hoddle, Garfield; Rev. William D. Williams, Sterling.

Western Association. — Rev. Samuel G. Wright, Brookville.

LOUISIANA.

South-Western Association. — Rev. Walter S. Alexander, D. D., New Orleans.

MAINE.

General Conference. — Rev. Frank E. Clarke, Portland; Rev. George S. Dickerman, Lewiston; Rev. John O. Fiske, D. D., Bath; Dea. William E. Gould, Portland.

Cumberland Conference. — Rev. William H. Fenn, Portland; Dea. J. Forest Jefferds, Portland.

Cumberland North Conference. — Rev. Frederick E. Emerich, Mechanic Falls; Dea. Jonathan L. H. Cobb, Lewiston.

Lincoln and Sagadahoc Conference. — Rev. Charles H. Pope, Thomaston.

Penobscot Conference. — Rev. Clarence S. Sargent, Brewer.

Union Conference. — George B. Barrows, Fryeburg.

York Conference. — Rev. Edward Chase, Biddeford; Dea. Samuel L. Boynton, Biddeford.

MASSACHUSETTS.

General Association. — Rev. Charles D. Barrows, Lowell; Rev. Charles L. Woodworth, Watertown; G. Henry Whitcomb, Worcester; Rev. Henry M. Dexter, D. D., Boston; Rev. Raymond H. Seeley, D. D., Haverhill; Rev. Samuel E. Herrick, D. D., Boston; Rev. John O. Means, D. D., Boston; Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., Boston; Dea. Edward I. Thomas, Brookline.

Andover Conference. — Rev. Egbert C. Smyth, D. D., Andover; Dea. James G. Buttrick, Lowell.

Barnstable Conference. — Rev. Charles E. Harwood, Orleans; Dea. Jonathan Higgins, Orleans.

Berkshire North Conference. — Rev. Charles V. Spear, Pittsfield.

Berkshire South Conference. — Rev. Mason Noble, Sheffield; Dea. James Van Deusen, Sheffield.

Brookfield Conference. — Manning Leonard, Southbridge.

Essex North Conference. — Rev. Pliny S. Boyd, Amesbury Mills; Rev. Omar W. Folsom, Newburyport.

Essex South Conference. — Rev. Albert H. Currier, Lynn; Rev. Rowland B. Howard, Rockport; Dea. George E. Marsh, Lynn.

Hampden Conference. — Rev. John H. Lockwood, Westfield; Rev. Washington Gladden, D. D., Springfield.

Hampshire Conference. — Rev. Dwight W. Marsh, D. D., Haydenville.

Hampshire East Conference. — Rev. Winfield S. Hawkes, South Hadley Falls; Dea. J. Carew.

Mendon Conference. — Rev. James M. Bell, West Medway.

Middlesex South Conference. — Dea. John A. Fitch, Hopkinton.

Middlesex Union Conference. — Rev. Abijah P. Marvin, D. D., Lancaster; Rev. George R. W. Scott, Fitchburg.

Norfolk Conference. — Rev. Thomas A. Emerson, Braintree; Rev. George E. Freeman, Abington.

Old Colony Conference. — Rev. Henry M. Grant, Middleborough.

Pilgrim Conference. — Rev. Thomas S. Robie, South Plymouth; George W. Brackett, Kingston.

Suffolk North Conference. — Rev. Alexander S. Twombly, Boston; Dea. Charles A. Richardson, Chelsea.

Suffolk South Conference. — Rev. Joseph B. Clark, Dorchester; Benjamin C. Hardwick, Dorchester.

Suffolk West Conference. — George H. Jones, Newton; Rev. Jacob M. Manning, D. D., Boston.

Taunton Conference. — Rev. Michael Burnham, Fall River; E. B. Towne, Raynham.

Woburn Conference. — Rev. Edward G. Porter, Lexington; Joseph H. Tyler, Winchester.

Worcester Central Conference. — Dea. Frank B. Knowles, Worcester.

Worcester North Conference. — Rev. William D. Herrick, Gardner.

Worcester South Conference. — Henry F. Wing, Grafton.

Michigan.

General Association. — Rev. Leroy Warren, Lansing.

Eastern Conference. — Rev. Minor W. Fairfield, Romeo; Rev. A. Hastings Ross, Port Huron; Dea. George M. Lane, Detroit.

Genesee Conference. — Rev. Warren F. Day, East Saginaw; Rev. Frederick S. Hayden, Flint.

Grand River Conference. — Rev. J. Morgan Smith, Grand Rapids; Rev. Levi F. Waldo, Cannonsburg; James Gallup, Grand Rapids.

Grand Traverse Conference. — Rev. Joseph D. Millard, Frankfort.

Jackson Conference. — Rev. Jesse W. Hough, D. D., Jackson; Dea. Ira J. Saunders, Union City.

Kalamazoo Association. — Rev. Levi P. Spellman, Covert; Homer O. Hitchcock.

Lansing Association. — Rev. Theodore P. Prudden, Lansing; Elliot F. Grabill, Granville.

Marshall Conference. — Rev. J. Newton Brown, Charlotte; Rev. Wolcott B. Williams, Charlotte.

Southern Michigan Conference. — Rev. R. Woodworth, Church's Corner.

Western Conference. — Rev. Richard Lewis, Grand Haven.

MINNESOTA.

General Conference. — Rev. Levi H. Cobb, Minneapolis; Rev. James W. Strong, D. D., Northfield.

Anoka Conference. — Rev. Malcolm McG. Dana, D. D., St. Paul; Rev. George A. Hood, Minneapolis; Dea. David C. Bell, Minneapolis.

Northern Pacific Conference. — Rev. Reuben A. Beard, Brainerd.

Owatonna Conference. — Rev. Charles W. Merrill, Waseca; Rev. Cassius E. Wright, Austin; Joseph Thayer, Spring Valley.

Western Conference. — Rev. Jesse L. Fonda, Morris; Rev. Henry C. Simmons, Walnut Station.

Winona Conference. — Rev. John W. Bradshaw, Rochester; Dea. Charles Gerrish, St. Charles.

MISSOURI.

General Association. — Rev. Constans L. Goodell, D. D., St. Louis.

Hannibal Association. — Rev. Elihu Loomis, Memphis; Wesley H. Loomis, Hannibal.

Kansas City Association. — Rev. John G. Bailey, Windsor.

Kidder Association. — Rev. Irvine T. Hull, Breckenridge.

St. Louis Association. — Rev. Truman M. Post, D. D., St. Louis.

Springfield Association. — Rev. Nathan J. Morrison, D. D., North Springfield; Rev. P. B. West, Lamar.

NEBRASKA.

General Association. — Rev. Edmund B. Fairfield, D. D., Lincoln; Rev. Hiram N. Gates, Omaha.

Blue Valley Association. — Rev. Harmon Bross, Crete; Rev. Samuel C. Dean, Steele City; Rev. Herman A. French, Milford.

Columbus Association. — Rev. Abraham A. Cressman, Nebraska City; Rev. Julius A. Reed, Columbus.

Lincoln Association. — Rev. William Leavitt, Ashland.

Omaha Association. — Rev. Judson G. Spencer, Irvington.

NEW HAMPSHIRE.

General Association. — Rev. George B. Spalding, D. D., Dover.

Cheshire Conference. — Rev. John Colby, Fitzwilliam; Rev. Henry H. Hamilton, Hinsdale.

Hillsborough Conference. — Rev. William A. Lamb, Milford.

Merrimack Conference. — Jonathan E. Sargent, LL. D., Concord.

Rockingham Conference. — Rev. William A. McGinley, Portsmouth.

Strafford Conference. — Rev. George I. Bard, Meredith Village.

NEW JERSEY.

Congregational Association. — Rev. Amory H. Bradford, Montclair; Rev. Frank A. Johnson, Chester; John P. Jube, Newark; Dea. R. H. Thayer, New York.

NEW YORK.

General Association. — Rev. Lyman Abbott, D. D., New York; Rev. Horace F. Dudley, Warsaw; Rev. James W. Grush, Lockport; Rev. John C. Holbrook, D. D., Syracuse.

Black River and St. Lawrence Association. — Rev. Joel J. Hough, Antwerp; Rev. George A. Rockwood, Rensselaer Falls.

Central Association. — Rev. Augustus F. Beard, D. D., Syracuse.

Hudson River Association. — Rev. Frederick R. Marvin, Middletown; Rev. William S. Smart, D. D., Albany.

New York and Brooklyn Association. — Rev. Edward Beecher, D. D., New York.

Oneida, Chenango, and Delaware Association. — Rev. Charles C. Johnson, Smyrna; Herbert M. Dixon, Smyrna.

Ontario Association. — Rev. Joseph L. Bennett, Spencerport; Dea. Myron S. Hall, West Bloomfield.

Susquehanna Association. — Rev. Alexander D. Stowell, Nichols.

Welsh Association. — Rev. Edward Davies, Waterville.

Western New York Association. — Rev. Frederick W. Beecher, Wellsville; Rev. Henry L. Hubbell, West Newark; Dea. Francis W. Sprague, Duke Centre, Pa.

Wyoming Association. — Abram B. Lawrence, Warsaw.

NORTH CAROLINA.

State Conference. — Rev. George S. Smith, Raleigh.

OHIO.

Congregational Association. — Rev. Samuel Wolcott, D. D., Cleveland; William H. Upson, Akron.

Central North Conference. — Rev. Frank Russell, Mansfield; Rev. Josiah Strong, Sandusky.

Central Ohio Conference. — Rev. Russell T. Hall, Mount Vernon; Rev. D. Sebastian Jones, Alexandria.

Cleveland Conference. — Rev. William Kincaid, Oberlin; Rev. Justin E. Twitchell, D. D., Cleveland.

Eastern Ohio Conference, Welsh. — Rev. William P. Edwards, Newburg Station.

Grand River Conference. — Rev. Samuel W. Dickinson, Jefferson; Matthew G. Dick, Ashtabula.

Marietta Conference. — Dea. Douglas Putnam, Harmon.

Medina Association. — Rev. John S. Whitman, Chatham Centre.

Miami Conference. — Rev. Charles H. Daniels, Cincinnati.

Plymouth Rock Conference. — Rev. Charles Cutler, Burton; Dea. Julius O. Worallo, Chardon.

Puritan Conference. — Rev. Aaron M. Hills, Ravenna.

Toledo Conference. — Rev. Robert McCune, Toledo.

OREGON AND WASHINGTON TERRITORY.

Congregational Association. — Rev. George H. Atkinson, D. D., Portland, Or.; Mrs. George H. Atkinson, Portland, Or.; Dea. Homer H. Humphrey, Portland, Or.

PENNSYLVANIA.

Western Association. — Rev. Henry C. Crane, Allegheny City.

RHODE ISLAND.

Congregational Conference. — Rev. Calvin R. Fitts, Slatersville; Rev. Joseph J. Woolley, Pawtucket; Dea. Amos C. Barstow, Providence.

TENNESSEE.

Central South Conference and North Alabama. — Rev. Henry S. Bennett, Nashville; Benjamin A. Imes, Memphis.

VERMONT.

General Convention. — Rev. Isaac Jennings, Bennington; Rev. Charles S. Smith, Montpelier; George G. Benedict, Burlington.

Caledonia Conference. — Rev. Henry W. Jones, St. Johnsbury.

Chittenden Conference. — Rev. Lewis O. Brastow, D. D., Burlington.

Rutland Conference. — Rev. Edward T. Hooker, Castleton; Loomis C. Spaulding, Poultney.

Washington Conference. — Rev. William S. Hazen, Northfield.

WISCONSIN.

Congregational and Presbyterian Convention. — Rev. Aaron L. Chapin, D. D., Beloit.

Beloit Convention. — Rev. T. Parsons Sawin, Janesville; Dea. J. C. Plumb, Milton.

La Crosse Convention. — Dea. Hiram E. Kelley, Sparta.

Lemonweir Convention. — Rev. Daniel A. Campbell, Big Spring.

Madison Convention. — Rev. Robert Quaife, Lake Mills.

Milwaukee Convention. — Rev. Joseph W. Healey, D. D., Milwaukee; Rev. George W. Nelson, Wauwatosa; Edward D. Holton, Milwaukee.

Mineral Point Convention. — Rev. Alfred P. Johnson, Platteville.

St. Croix Convention. — Rev. William W. Norton, New Richmond.

Winnebago Convention. — Rev. Samuel V. S. Fisher, Menasha; Rev. Edward P. Salmon, Depere; Dea. Calvin C. Bayley.

HONORARY MEMBERS.

OFFICERS AND APPOINTEES OF THE COUNCIL:

Registrar. — Rev. William H. Moore, Hartford, Conn.

Provisional committee. — Rev. Leander T. Chamberlain, D. D., Norwich, Conn.; Charles G. Hammond, Chicago, Ill.

Committee on the parish system. — Rev. George B. Safford, D. D., Burlington, Vt.

Committee on pastorless churches. — Rev. Robert West, St. Louis, Mo.

To prepare a paper. — Rev. Hiram Mead, D. D., Oberlin, O.

DELEGATES FROM NATIONAL CONGREGATIONAL CHARITABLE SOCIETIES:

American College and Education Society. — Rev. Increase W. Tarbox, D. D., Boston, Mass.

American Congregational Association. — Edward A. Studley, Boston, Mass.

American Congregational Union. — Rev. William B. Brown, D. D., New York city.

American Home Missionary Society. — Rev. Henry M. Storrs, D. D., New York city.

American Missionary Association. — Rev. Michael E. Strieby, D. D., New York city.

DELEGATES FROM THEOLOGICAL SEMINARIES:

Chicago. — Rev. George S. F. Savage, D. D., Chicago, Ill.

DELEGATES FROM CORRESPONDING BODIES:

General Congregational Union of England and Wales. — Rev. Alexander Hannay, London.

General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. — Rev. Hervey D. Ganse, D. D.

General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. — Rev. Mosheim Rhodes, D. D.

General Conference of the Free Baptist Churches. — Rev. Ransom Dunn, D. D.

BY VOTE OF THE COUNCIL:

Pastors in St. Louis. — Rev. Theodore Clifton, Rev. James H. Harwood.

At 12.30, the doxology was sung, and a recess was taken till 2.30 p. m.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON, November 11.

Welcome.

At 2.30, the Council united in singing, "All hail the power of Jesus' name," prayer was offered by the moderator, and Rev. Truman M. Post, D. D., of St. Louis, made an address of welcome.

Provisional Committee.

The provisional committee made a report,[1] which was accepted and approved.

Committee on Nominations.

The committee on nominations, named by the moderator, were appointed as follows: —

Rev. George S. F. Savage, D. D., of Illinois; Rev. George H. Atkinson, D. D., of Oregon; Rev. John C. Holbrook, D. D., of New York; Rev. Lavalette Perrin, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. Joseph J. Woolley, of Rhode Island; George B. Barrows, of Maine; George G. Benedict, of Vermont.

Daily Order.

The following order for the daily sessions was adopted: —

Devotion from 8.30 till 9 a. m.; recess from 12.30 till 2.30, and from 5.30 till 7.30 p. m.; adjourn with singing or prayer at 9.30 p. m. At the opening of each morning business session, a time not exceeding fifteen minutes to be set apart for the introduction of miscellaneous business, to be referred to the appropriate committee without debate.

Secretary's Report.

The secretary made a report,[2] which was accepted and referred to the following committee: —

Rev. Israel E. Dwinell, D. D., of California; Rev. Augustus F. Beard, D. D., of New York; Rev. Alden B. Robbins, D. D., of Iowa: Rev. Joseph E. Roy, D. D., of Georgia; William E. Gould, of Maine.

Treasurer's Report.

The treasurer made a report,[3] which was accepted and referred to the following committee: —

Dea. Charles Benedict, of Connecticut; James W. Scoville, of Illinois; Abram B. Lawrence, of New York; William H. Upson, of Ohio; Edward D. Holton, of Wisconsin.

It was *voted*, That the thanks of the Council be tendered to the treasurer for his services, and for money advanced by him in its behalf.

Officers for Three Years.

Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., of Massachusetts, was chosen secretary; Rev. William H. Moore, of Connecticut, registrar;

[1] Page 50. [2] Page 51. [3] Page 58.

Rev. Lavalette Perrin, D. D., of Connecticut, treasurer; and Dea. Charles Benedict, of Connecticut, auditor.

Creeds.

Memorials [1] relating to creeds, from the General Congregational Conference of Minnesota, the Congregational Association of Ohio, and the Southern Central Conference, were presented, read, and laid on the table.

Publishing Committee.

The publishing committee made a report,[2] which, and the subject of the Year Book, were referred to the following committee: —

Dea. Amos C. Barstow, of Rhode Island; Rev. Lyman Abbott, D. D., of New York; Rev. George H. Atkinson, D. D., of Oregon; Rev. Levi H. Cobb, of Minnesota; Rev. Simeon Gilbert, of Illinois; Rev. John O. Means, D. D., of Massachusetts; Rev. Justin E. Twitchell, D. D., of Ohio.

Prayer was offered by Rev. Julian M. Sturtevant, Jr., D. D., of Iowa. The doxology was sung, and at 5.30, a recess was taken till 7.30.

THURSDAY EVENING, November 11.

Protestantism in France.

At 7.30, after singing, prayer was offered by Rev. Arthur Little, of Illinois, and Rev. George T. Dodds spoke in behalf of Protestantism in France.

The hymn, "My faith looks up to Thee," was sung.

Sermon.

Rev. Samuel E. Herrick, D. D., of Massachusetts, preached from Luke 11: 29, "This is an evil generation; they seek a sign." Prayer was offered by the moderator, the doxology was sung, the benediction was pronounced by Rev. Samuel E. Herrick, D. D., of Massachusetts, and at 9.30, the Council adjourned till 8.30 a. m., Friday, November 12.

FRIDAY MORNING, November 12.

Devotion.

The Council met at 8.30, and spent half an hour in devotion, led by Rev. Joseph B. Clark, of Massachusetts.

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[1] Page 133. [2] Page 53.

At 9, the moderator took the chair, and prayer was offered by Rev. George L. Walker, D. D., of Connecticut.

The minutes of Thursday were read and approved.

Credentials.

The committee on credentials made a report in part, which was accepted.

Thanks.

It was *voted*, That the thanks of the Council be tendered to Rev. Samuel E. Herrick, D. D., of Massachusetts, for his sermon, and that a copy be requested for publication.[1]

Sabbath Services.

It was *voted*, That a committee on services for next Sabbath be appointed.

The Indians.

A memorial[2] from the Congregational Association of Dakota, relating to the Indians, was presented, read, and referred to the following committee: —

Marshall C. Hazard, of Illinois; Rev. Amory H. Bradford, of New Jersey; Rev. William L. Bray, of Iowa; Dea. Amos C. Barstow, of Rhode Island; Dea. Homer H. Humphrey, of Oregon; Dea. Edward I. Thomas, of Massachusetts.

Creeds.

Rev. Hiram Mead, D. D., of Ohio, read a paper[3] on creeds, which, and the memorials on the table on that subject, were referred to the following committee: —

Rev. Aaron L. Chapin, D. D., of Wisconsin; Rev. Charles D. Barrows, of Massachusetts; Rev. Stephen R. Dennen, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. Nathaniel A. Hyde, D. D., of Indiana; Rev. Frank P. Woodbury, of Illinois; Dea. David C. Bell, of Minnesota; Jonathan E. Sargent, LL. D., of New Hampshire.

Honorary Members.

It was *voted*, That the pastors of the Congregational churches in this city be invited to sit as honorary members.

The Parish System.

The committee on the parish system made a report, and a minority of said committee made a report. Both were accepted, and the subject was discussed.

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[1] Page 34. [2] Page 141. [3] Page 144.

At 12.30, the doxology was sung, and a recess was taken till 2.30 p. m.

FRIDAY AFTERNOON, November 12.

At 2.30, prayer was offered by Rev. Albert H. Currier, of Massachusetts.

The Parish System.

The discussion was resumed, and it was *voted*, That the reports on the parish system be laid on the table, and be printed.[1]

Salutations.

The moderator presented a communication[2] from the Congregational Union of England and Wales, asking that a large delegation be appointed to attend its Jubilee in 1881, and also introduced its secretary, Rev. Alexander Hannay, who expressed the salutations of that body.

Memorials on the National Council and the Year Book.

Memorials[3] relating to the National Council, from the Congregational Association of New Jersey, the General Association of New York, Hudson River Association of New York, and Denmark Association of Iowa, were presented, read, and referred to a committee of five, to be appointed. A letter from certain churches in Kentucky was likewise referred.

A memorial from Omaha Association of Nebraska, relating to the Year Book, was presented, read, and referred to the committee on the report of the publishing committee and on the Year Book.

The hymn, "My faith looks up to Thee," was sung.

It was *voted*, That this evening be devoted to business.

Merchants' Exchange.

A communication was received from the Merchants' Exchange, inviting members of the Council to visit, at their convenience, the rooms of the association.

Sabbath Services.

The committee on services for next Sabbath were appointed as follows: —

Rev. Constans L. Goodell, D. D., Rev. Truman M. Post, D. D., and Rev. Theodore Clifton, all of St. Louis.

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[1] Page 61. [2] Page 49. [3] Page 186.

Provisional Committee.

The provisional committee were appointed as follows: —

Joseph R. Hawley, LL. D., of Connecticut; Rev. Constans L. Goodell, D. D., of Missouri; Rev. Thomas K. Noble, of California; Alfred S. Barnes, of New York; Dea. Amos C. Barstow, of Rhode Island; Frederick Billings, of Vermont; Charles G. Hammond, of Illinois; and the secretary, registrar, and treasurer.

Ministerial Standing.

The committee on ministerial standing made a report with resolutions, and a member of said committee made a minority report with resolutions.[1]

At 5.30, the doxology was sung, and a recess was taken till 7.30.

FRIDAY EVENING, November 12.

At 7.30, prayer was offered by Rev. Edward Beecher, D. D., of New York, and the hymn, "Nearer, my God, to Thee," was sung.

Ministerial Standing.

The reports on ministerial standing were accepted and discussed, speakers being limited to five minutes each.

At 10, the doxology was sung, the benediction was pronounced by the moderator, and the Council adjourned till 8.30 a. m., Saturday, November 13.

SATURDAY MORNING, November 13.

Devotion.

The Council met at 8.30, and spent half an hour in devotion, led by Rev. Nathaniel A. Hyde, D. D., of Indiana.

At 9, the moderator took the chair, and prayer was offered by Rev. Nathaniel A. Hyde, D. D., of Indiana, and the hymn, "Blest be the tie that binds," was sung.

The minutes of Friday were read and approved.

Committees.

The following committees were appointed: —

On memorials on the National Council. — Rev. George L. Walker, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. Lyman Abbott, D. D., of New York;

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[1] Page 77.

Rev. Constans L. Goodell, D. D., of Missouri; Rev. Samuel Wolcott, D. D., of Ohio; Dea. Charles A. Richardson, of Massachusetts.

On the statement in behalf of Protestantism in France. — Rev. Elias H. Richardson, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. Edmund B. Fairfield, D. D., of Nebraska; Rev. William H. Fenn, of Maine; Rev. George B. Spalding, D. D., of New Hampshire; Rev. James W. Strong, D. D., of Minnesota.

To nominate delegates to corresponding bodies. — Rev. John O. Fiske, D. D., of Maine; Rev. Richard Cordley, D. D., of Kansas; Rev. Charles C. Cragin, of Iowa; Rev. Minor W. Fairfield, of Michigan; Dea. Charles D. Talcott, of Connecticut.

The communication from the Congregational Union of England and Wales was referred to the last-named committee.

Ministerial Standing.

A resolution on ministerial standing was received and referred to the business committee. The debate on the reports on that subject was resumed.

The resolutions of the report of the majority were taken up singly, and the first resolution was amended by substituting for it the three following resolutions, which were adopted, viz.: —

Resolved, (1) That a *pro re nata* council is the origin of ministerial standing in our fellowship, and the ultimate resort in all cases of question.

Resolved, (2) That the continued certification of ministerial standing may well be left to the ministerial associations or the organizations of churches.

Resolved, (3) That the body of churches in any locality have the inalienable right of extending ministerial fellowship to, or withholding fellowship from, any person within their bounds, no matter what his relations may be in church membership or ecclesiastical affiliations, the proceedings to be commenced by any church, and to be conducted with due regard to equity.

It was *voted*, That said report, including the remaining resolutions, be printed and commended to the careful consideration of the churches.

The hymn, "All hail the power of Jesus' name," was sung.

The resolution on ministerial standing referred to the business committee, at their recommendation, was laid on the table.

American Congregational Union and other National Congregational Charitable Societies.

The committee to consult with a committee of the American Congregational Union made a report,[1] which was accepted; and Rev. William B. Brown, D. D., of New York, made a statement[2] in behalf of said society, and it was *voted*, That the report and the statement be printed and commended to the churches.

Rev. Increase N. Tarbox, D. D., of Massachusetts, made a statement in behalf of the American College and Education Society.

The hymn, "Jesus, lover of my soul," was sung.

Rev. Michael E. Strieby, D. D., of New York, made a statement in behalf of the American Missionary Association.

Rev. John O. Means, D. D., of Massachusetts, made a statement in behalf of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions.

The hymn, "From all that dwell below the skies," was sung.

At 12.30, a recess was taken till 2.30.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON, November 13.

At 2.30, the hymn, "O for a closer walk with God," was sung.

Protestantism in France.

The committee on the statement in behalf of Protestantism in France reported the following resolutions, which were adopted: —

Resolved, (1) That the Congregational churches of the United States, as represented in this body, recognize, in the country from which the brethren of the French deputation bring tidings to us, a sister republic, endeared to us as American citizens by the imperishable memories of help given to our nation in the dark days of its great struggle for freedom and independence.

Resolved, (2) That in what these brethren relate to us, we recognize the good hand of God in answer to the prayers of the holy men who were in their day the faithful and true witnesses of Jesus even unto death; and in sympathy with these brethren, we offer hearty thanks to Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, both theirs and ours.

Resolved, (3) That in the tidings concerning God's great work which is now in progress in France, we see the opportunity of our churches for the expression of their thankfulness by Christian helpfulness; also an opportunity for practical acknowl-

[1] Page 99. [2] Page 103.

edgment of those great and sacred obligations to France of which we have made mention.

Resolved, (4) That in these practical recognitions of our obligations, no time should be lost: therefore, —

Resolved, (5) That we do cordially commend these our brethren of the French deputation to our churches, as messengers to us of Jesus Christ; and that, through whatever channels it may be appointed that our helpful bestowments shall reach them, these be, both for abundance and heartiness, to the praise of our American Christian gratitude and liberality; — that our churches, moreover, would do well to make these their generous bestowments, if need be, without personal solicitations from any quarter; and we do accordingly so exhort.

Resolved, (6) That this Council do now pause in its business, and unite in prayer to Almighty God in behalf of our brethren in France, in this the manifest hour of their God's merciful visitation.

Prayer was offered accordingly by Rev. John O. Fiske, D. D., of Maine.

National Congregational Charitable Societies.

Rev. John O. Means, D. D., of Massachusetts, made a statement in behalf of the Congregational Publishing Society.

The hymn, "My country, 't is of thee," was sung.

Rev. Henry M. Storrs, D. D., of New York, made a statement in behalf of the American Home Missionary Society.

The hymn, "Jesus shall reign where'er the sun," was sung.

Committee on the Relation of the Churches to Missions.

The following were appointed a committee on the address on the relation of the churches to missions, to be delivered Sunday evening by Rev. Leander T. Chamberlain, D. D., of Connecticut: — Rev. William Kincaid, of Ohio; Rev. Henry S. Bennett, of Tennessee; Rev. A. Hastings Ross, of Michigan; Rev. Charles S. Smith, of Vermont; G. Henry Whitcomb, of Massachusetts.

The New West.

Rev. Frederick A. Noble, D. D., of Illinois, read a paper on the New West,[1] which was referred to the following committee: —

Rev. Edward G. Beckwith, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. Joseph B. Clark, of Massachusetts; Rev. Abel K. Packard, of Colorado; John Deere, of Illinois; John P. Jube, of New Jersey.

[1] Page 174.

Committees.

Committees were appointed as follows: —

To draft a response to the Congregational Union of England and Wales. — Rev. Simeon Gilbert, of Illinois; Rev. Stephen R. Dennen, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. William D. Herrick, of Massachusetts.

Publishing committee. — The secretary, the registrar, the treasurer; Rev. Henry A. Hazen, of Massachusetts; Dea. Charles A. Richardson, of Massachusetts.

Disabled Ministers.

The committee on disabled ministers made a report,[1] which was accepted and referred to the business committee.

Delegates to Corresponding Bodies.

The committee to nominate delegates to corresponding bodies made a report, which was accepted, amended, and adopted, as follows: —

To the Congregational Union of England and Wales. — Rev. Elihu C. Barnard, of Illinois; Rev. George F. Magoun, D. D., of Iowa; Rev. Samuel C. Bartlett, D. D., of New Hampshire; Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., of Massachusetts; Rev. Edward Davies, of New York; Rev. Elias H. Richardson, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. Stephen R. Dennen, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. Joseph E. Roy, D. D., of Georgia; Rev. Henry M. Dexter, D. D., of Massachusetts; Rev. Henry M. Storrs, D. D., of New York; Rev. Israel E. Dwinell, D. D., of California; Rev. Richard S. Storrs, D. D., of New York; Rev. James H. Fairchild, D. D., of Ohio; Rev. Michael E. Strieby, D. D., of New York; Rev. Minor W. Fairfield, of Michigan; Warren Currier, of Missouri; Rev. Simeon Gilbert, of Illinois; Edward D. Holton, of Wisconsin; Rev. Constans L. Goodell, D. D., of Missouri; Dea. Charles D. Talcott, of Connecticut.

The provisional committee were authorized to appoint additional delegates to said body.

Congregational Union of Scotland. — Rev. William B. Brown, D. D., of New York; Rev. Peter McVicar, D. D., of Kansas; Rev. Richard S. Storrs, D. D., of New York.

Congregational Union of Ireland. — Rev. Stephen R. Dennen, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. George B. Safford, D. D., of Vermont; Dea. John H. Hollister, of Illinois.

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Congregational Union of Ontario and Quebec. — Rev. A. Hastings Ross, of Michigan; Rev. James W. Strong, D. D., of Minnesota; Rev. George L. Walker, D. D., of Connecticut.

Congregational Union of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. — Rev. George M. Adams, of Massachusetts; Rev. John O. Fiske, D. D., of Maine; Dea. William E. Gould, of Maine.

General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. — Rev. Leander T. Chamberlain, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. William S. Smart, D. D., of New York; Rev. Egbert C. Smyth, D. D., of Massachusetts.

General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States. — Rev. Constans L. Goodell, D. D., of Missouri; Rev. Julian M. Sturtevant, D. D., LL. D., of Illinois.

United Presbyterian Church of North America. — Rev. Amory H. Bradford, of New Jersey; Rev. Richard Cordley, D. D., of Kansas; Rev. Malcolm McG. Dana, D. D., of Minnesota.

Reformed Church in America. — Rev. Augustus F. Beard, D. D., of New York; Rev. Zachary Eddy, D. D., of Michigan; Rev. Samuel Wolcott, D. D., of Ohio.

United Brethren (Moravian). — Rev. J. Eames Rankin, D. D., of the District of Columbia; Rev. Eliphalet Whittlesey, of the District of Columbia.

General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. — Rev. Joseph Anderson, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. Charles T. Collins, of Ohio.

General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. — Does not meet until 1884.

Methodist Church. — Rev. Joseph Ward, of Dakota.

General Convention of the Baptist Churches. — Rev. Nathaniel J. Burton, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. Nathaniel A. Hyde, D. D., of Indiana; Rev. Truman M. Post, D. D., of Missouri.

General Conference of the Free Baptist Churches. — Rev. Edmund B. Fairfield, D. D., of Nebraska; Rev. Edward Y. Hincks, of Maine.

General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. — Rev. Edward P. Goodwin, D. D., of Illinois; Rev. William W. Patton, D. D., of the District of Columbia; Josiah L. Pickard, LL. D., of Iowa.

Methodist Congregational Churches of Georgia. — Rev. Theodore L. Day, of Connecticut; Rev. Frederick A. Noble, D. D., of Illinois.

Each delegate of the above list is authorized to appoint his own substitute.

The doxology was sung, and at 5.30, a recess was taken till 7.30.

SATURDAY EVENING, November 13.

Temperance.

At 7.30, the hymn, "I love thy kingdom, Lord," was sung, and prayer was offered by Rev. Julian M. Sturtevant, D. D., LL. D., of Illinois.

Rev. Samuel Wolcott, D. D., of Ohio, introduced Mrs. Mary A. Woodbridge, of Ohio, who spoke in behalf of the Women's National Christian Temperance Union.

Reports of Delegates to Corresponding Bodies.

Reports of delegates to corresponding bodies were made as follows, by letter or mention: —

Rev. Leonard Bacon, D. D., LL. D., of Connecticut, to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America.

Rev. George F. Magoun, D. D., of Iowa, by letter sent to the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

Rev. William Scudder, D. D., of Connecticut, to the General Synod of the Reformed Church in America.

Personally, — Rev. Justin E. Twitchell, D. D., of Ohio, to the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

Rev. Aaron L. Chapin, D. D., of Wisconsin, to the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America in 1880.

Rev. Henry S. Bennett, of Tennessee, to the General Assembly of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church.

Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., of Massachusetts, to the General Conference of the Free Baptist Churches.

Salutations.

Salutations from corresponding bodies were received as follows: —

Congregational Union of Canada. — Rev. John Burton, by letter.

General Conference of the Free Baptist Churches. — Rev. Ransom Dunn, D. D.

General Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. — Rev. Mosheim Rhodes, D. D.

General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. — Rev. Hervey D. Ganse, D. D.

To these personal salutations, responses were made by the moderator, and by Rev. Julian M. Sturtevant, Jr., D. D., of Iowa, assistant moderator.

Reply to the Congregational Union of England and Wales.

The committee to draft a response to the Congregational Union of England and Wales reported the following, which was adopted: —

The Congregational churches of the United States, in Council assembled, earnestly respond to the invitation of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, brought to us by their honored secretary, Rev. Alexander Hannay, to unite with them in the celebration of the approaching Jubilee of their Union, and to participate with them in the discussion of themes of great and common concernment. We also recognize, with gratefulness to God and sacred pride, the fact that the two great confederations of Congregational churches, though separated by the ocean, are nevertheless one in the bonds of a peculiar Christian fellowship, and in their profound reverence for the memory of our common ecclesiastical genesis and ancestry. And having appointed messengers to bear back to our Christian kindred beyond the sea our fraternal greetings and assurance of this existing fellowship, we heartily concur in the hope expressed, that at an early day there may be secured an International Congregational Conference to promote the general weal of the churches of our faith and order in all parts of the world, to the end that in this age of matchless opportunity and infinite inducement, the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour may be the more worthily advanced.

Sabbath Services.

The committee on services for the next Sabbath made a report, which was accepted and approved.

Prayer was offered by Rev. Levi H. Cobb, of Minnesota, the doxology was sung, and at 9.30, the Council adjourned till 8 a. m., Monday, November 15.

Sunday, November 14.

Public Worship and the Lord's Supper.

According to arrangement, —

At Pilgrim Church, Rev. Alexander Hannay, secretary of the Congregational Union of England and Wales, preached in the morning from Gen. 5 : 22–24, Rev. Henry M. Storrs, D. D., of New York, conducting the opening services. In the afternoon, members of the Council united with the church in the Lord's Supper, administered by Rev. Edward Beecher, D. D., of New York, and Rev. George H. Atkinson, D. D., of Oregon.

Relation of the Churches to Missions.

In the evening public worship was held, in which Rev. Joseph E. Roy, D. D., of Georgia, conducted the opening services; Rev. Leander T. Chamberlain, D. D., of Connecticut, delivered an address [1] on the relation of the churches to missions; Rev. Constans L. Goodell, D. D., the pastor, offered prayer, and Rev. Samuel Wolcott, D. D., of Ohio, pronounced the benediction.

Other Sabbath Services.

Ministers, members of the Council, preached morning and evening in other churches in the city and its vicinity.

MONDAY MORNING, November 15.

Devotion.

The Council met at 8, and spent half an hour in devotion, led by Rev. Levi H. Cobb, of Minnesota.

At 8.30, the moderator took the chair, and prayer was offered by Rev. Washington Gladden, D. D., of Massachusetts, and the hymn, "O for a thousand tongues to sing," was sung.

The minutes of Saturday and Sunday were read and approved.

Creeds.

The committee on the paper and memorials on creeds made a report [2] with resolutions, which was accepted, and the resolutions were adopted as follows: —

Resolved, (1) That the paper on creeds be printed,[3] and receive the thoughtful consideration of the churches.

Resolved, (2) That a committee of seven be appointed, who shall, as soon as practicable after the adjournment of the Council, select from among the members of our churches, in different parts of our land, twenty-five men of piety and ability, well versed in the truths of the Bible, and representing different shades of thought among us, who may be willing to confer and act together as a commission to prepare, in the form of a creed or catechism, or both, a simple, clear, and comprehensive exposition of the truths of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, for the instruction and edification of our churches.

Resolved, (3) That the committee of seven take pains to secure the willing co-operation of the men selected; that the commission

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[1] See page 203. [2] Page 198. [3] Page 144.

be left, without specific instructions from this body, to adopt their own methods of proceeding, and to take time as they may find necessary to perfect their work; and that the result of their labors, when complete, be reported — not to this Council, but to the churches and to the world through the public press — to carry such weight of authority as the character of the commission and the intrinsic merit of their exposition of truth may command.

The committee of seven were appointed as follows: —

Rev. Aaron L. Chapin, D. D., of Wisconsin; Rev. Charles D. Barrows, of Massachusetts; Rev. Stephen R. Dennen, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. Nathaniel A. Hyde, D. D., of Indiana; Rev. Frank P. Woodbury, of Illinois; Dea. David C. Bell, of Minnesota; Jonathan E. Sargent, LL. D., of New Hampshire.

The doxology was sung.

Pastorless Churches.

The committee on pastorless churches made a report,[1] which was accepted, and ordered to be printed; and the committee were thanked for their thorough work.

Monument to John Robinson.

The committee on a monument to John Robinson made a report,[2] which was accepted and approved; and the further prosecution of the matter was intrusted to the following committee: Rev. Henry M. Dexter, D. D., of Massachusetts; Rev. Samuel C. Bartlett, D. D., of New Hampshire; Rev. George E. Day, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. John K. McLean, of California; Alfred S. Barnes, of New York; Dea. Eliphalet W. Blatchford, of Illinois; Alpheus Hardy, of Massachusetts.

Disabled Ministers.

On the recommendation of the business committee, the report of the committee on disabled ministers was referred to the publishing committee, and the resolutions contained in it were commended to the churches.

Polygamy.

A memorial by Rev. Edward Beecher, D. D., of New York, to the President, Senate, and House of Representatives of the United States, on polygamy, was accepted, read, and referred to the committee on the paper on the New West.

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[1] Page 119. [2] Page 130.

Publishing Committee.

Rev. A. Hastings Ross, of Michigan, and Rev. Charles W. Merrill, of Minnesota, were added to the publishing committee of 1877 to report on absent church-members.

Memorials on the National Council.

The committee on memorials on the National Council made a report [1] with resolutions, which was accepted, and the resolutions were adopted, as follows: —

Resolved, (1) That this Council has received with great respect the memorials of the Associations of New York, New Jersey, and Oregon and Washington Territory also, and of the Hudson River Association; and after earnest consideration of the suggestions therein contained, feels constrained to express its conviction that the existence of a National Council, under the present constitution and rules, is not only a safe and useful bond of fellowship among our churches, and a means of great possible benefit to them, but is an instrument vindicated in its employment, and by the churches generally approved; and that it sees no cause to deny itself the simple method of expressing its judgment on all questions properly coming before it as a conference, in that way of voting universally understood and employed in all our religious assemblies.

Resolved, (2) That this National Council, in the future as in the past, should welcome any suggestions which may promote its best efficiency; and that we deem it cause of sincere congratulation that in this session, as in the last, there has been, even on ecclesiastical questions, substantial unanimity.

The following resolution, by a member of said committee, was also adopted: —

Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed to enter into correspondence with the organizations which have memorialized this body on the subject of the Council, invite them to consider what measures are necessary to allay the apprehensions expressed in the memorials laid before us, and to make the Council more efficient for the purposes for which it was organized, as expressed in its constitution; which committee shall report to the next triennial Council the result of their correspondence with their recommendations thereon.

The following were appointed said committee: —

[1] Page 186.

Rev. Lyman Abbott, D. D., of New York; Rev. Leander T. Chamberlain, D. D., of Connecticut; Rev. Frederick A. Noble, D. D., of Illinois; Rev. Truman M. Post, D. D., of Missouri; Rev. George B. Spalding, D. D., of New Hampshire.

Non-Resident Church-Members.

The publishing committee made a report[1] on non-resident church-members, which was accepted, and ordered to be printed, and was commended to the churches.

Publishing Committee, Year Book, and Finances.

The committee on the report of the publishing committee and on the Year Book made a report,[2] with resolutions, which was accepted, and the resolutions were adopted, as follows: —

Resolved, That at the close of this Council, its minutes and papers be, and they are hereby, referred to the publishing committee, with power to publish in cheap form the whole, or such parts of the same as they shall deem expedient; and that said committee be also authorized and directed to publish a Year Book for the years 1881, 1882, and 1883, for distribution among the churches and ministers represented in the Council.

Resolved, That the provisional committee be, and hereby are, directed to furnish every church and minister upon the rolls of the denomination a copy of the Minutes and of each Year Book ordered by this Council, free of charge and postage paid; and that in order to cover the cost of the same and also the other expenses of the Council, they be, and are hereby, authorized to ask through the State bodies contributions of the churches of not exceeding one and one half cents per member for the first year, and of one half that sum for each of the other two years.

The Pastorate.

The committee on the report of the secretary made a report,[3] which was accepted, and discussed till 1 p. m., when the doxology was sung, and a recess was taken till 2.

MONDAY AFTERNOON, November 15.

At 2, the hymn, "I love thy kingdom, Lord," was sung, and prayer was offered by Rev. Alvah L. Frisbie, of Iowa.

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[1] Page 131. [2] Page 194. [3] Page 192.

The Pastorate.

The discussion was resumed, and it was —

Voted, That the whole subject of the pastorate, as referred to in the report of the secretary and in the report of the committee on said report, be referred to a committee of five, who shall communicate with the general State organizations as to some method whereby both the communion of the churches and the recognition of persons virtually pastors, though not installed by council, may be secured, and shall report at the next meeting.

The following were appointed said committee : —

Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., of Massachusetts ; Rev. Joseph Anderson, D. D., of Connecticut ; Rev. A. Hastings Ross, of Michigan ; Rev. Sylvester D. Storrs, of Kansas ; Rev. Edward F. Williams, of Illinois.

Theological Seminaries and Robert College.

Statements were made by theological seminaries, as follows : —

Andover, — by Rev. Egbert C. Smyth, D. D., of Massachusetts.

Bangor, — None.

Chicago, — by Rev. George S. F. Savage, D. D., of Illinois.

Hartford, — by Rev. Leavitt H. Hallock.

New Haven, — by letter of Rev. Samuel Harris, D. D., of Connecticut.

Oberlin, — by Rev. Hiram Mead, D. D., of Ohio.

Pacific, — by Rev. Israel E. Dwinell, D. D., of California.

A statement in behalf of *Robert College*, in Turkey, was made by Rev. Constans L. Goodell, D. D., of Missouri.

It was *resolved*, That the Council has heard with great interest the statements from the various theological seminaries representing the Congregationalists of our land, and records with gratitude its confidence in these institutions ; that it notes, with thankfulness mingled with augmenting hope for their future, their growth in equipment and scope of instruction, and the goodly number of students in them preparing to enter the ministry of the Lord Jesus, and nobly responding from year to year to the urgent call for men for the home and foreign missionary fields.

National Congregational Charitable Societies Commended.

It was *resolved*, That having heard the statements of the national Congregational charitable societies, we devoutly praise God for the progress they record, wish them God speed, and commend them to

the continued confidence and the liberal support of all the Congregational churches in our land.

The Indians.

The committee on the memorial relating to the Indians made a report,[1] with resolutions, which was accepted, and the resolutions were adopted, as follows: —

Resolved, (1) That the Council declares that in its opinion the system of allotment of Indian agencies to distinct denominational care — that is exclusive of all other denominations — is inherently wrong and unjust, both with respect to the rights of the denominations to plant missions wherever it may seem to them practicable and obligatory, and with respect to the rights of the Indian to say what shall be the source and the character of his religious instruction.

Resolved, (2) That a committee be appointed to confer with the officers of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, and jointly with them to bring this matter before the proper authorities at Washington.

Resolved, (3) That the churches represented in and by this Council be exhorted to keep the subject of the right of the Indian to himself, to a home, and to the protection of the law, in the public thought until by statute these rights shall be secured to him.

The following were appointed said committee: —

Rev. Mark Hopkins, D. D., LL. D., of Massachusetts; Rev. George H. Atkinson, D. D., of Oregon; Rev. Michael E. Strieby, D. D., of New York; Rev. Joseph Ward, of Dakota; Dea. Eliphalet W. Blatchford, of Illinois; N. C. Deering, of Iowa; Dea. Benjamin Douglas, of Connecticut; William Windom, of Minnesota.

The New West Education Commission.

The committee on the paper on the New West made a report,[2] with resolutions, which was accepted, and the resolutions were adopted, as follows: —

Resolved, (1) That this Council recommend the New West Education Commission to confer with the American Home Missionary Society, with a view to securing from that society the hearty acceptance and vigorous prosecution of the special work for which the Commission has been organized.

Resolved, (2) That in the event of the failure to secure this re-

[1] Page 196. [2] Page 200.

sult after such conference, this Council heartily commends the work of the New West Education Commission to the prayers and the practical co-operation of the churches represented in this body.

Polygamy.

On the recommendation of the same committee, the memorial on polygamy was adopted, — to be signed by the officers of the Council and sent to Washington, to the President of the United States, and to the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives, — and is as follows : —

" The National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States respectfully represents : That, in the Territory of Utah, the practice of polygamy has prevailed in contravention of Christian morality and the laws of the United States, and that the Supreme Court of the United States has decided that such a violation of law and morals cannot be defended by the plea of rights of conscience ; and that nevertheless this violation of law is still persisted in, and that one who is believed by the nation to be guilty of this violation of law and morals has been chosen as a representative of the Territory of Utah, and has taken his seat as such in the House of Representatives.

" In view of these facts, we earnestly entreat you to put forth all your influence and power to sustain the law, and to make sure the infliction of just punishment on all offenders.

" The acts of which we complain are part of an immoral system, hostile to our national welfare and to Christian civilization. Nevertheless, the advocates of that system are making ceaseless efforts to extend it and to gain ascendancy in other Territories, thereby endangering the highest interests of this nation in coming generations.

" We pray you, therefore, to see to it that neither Utah, nor any other Territory in which so malignant a system exists, shall ever, until it is removed, be admitted into our Union as a State, to corrupt our national politics and to give new power to the worst elements of human society."

Finances, Treasurer.

The committee on the report of the treasurer made a report,[1] which was accepted.

The following resolutions were adopted : —

[1] Page 195.

Resolved, That the action of the committee on the report of the treasurer, in the measures taken to secure subscriptions and pledges for the payment of the debt created under the orders of the last Council, has our hearty approval; and that the committee have our hearty thanks.

Resolved, That the committee be, and are hereby, requested to place the amount of money raised by them, and the pledges received by them, in the hands of the treasurer; and that the treasurer, acting under the advice of the provisional committee, be, and hereby is, authorized to secure such further subscriptions as may be needed to cancel the debt; and that he report the names of donors, and the amount of their donations, to the next Council.

Resolved, That the treasurer be authorized to ask, at his discretion, offerings to the treasury for its present relief and future efficiency.

Resolved, That the treasurer be instructed to publish each year in the Year Book the condition of the treasury, and the amounts received and lacking from the several State bodies.

Credentials.

The committee on credentials made a final report, which was accepted and approved.

Relation of the Churches to Missions.

The committee on the address on the relation of the churches to missions made a report,[1] with a recommendation that a copy of the address be requested for publication, which was accepted and approved.

Provisional Committee Instructed.

It was *resolved*, That in view of the great pressure of business crowded into the sessions of the Council, allowing little time for devotional exercises, and less for fellowship, it is the judgment of this body that the time heretofore devoted to its sessions is inadequate, and that the provisional committee are hereby requested, in their arrangements for the next National Council, to allow time sufficient for the realization of the best results.

Divorce.

The following minute was adopted: —

The National Council of the Congregational Churches of the

[1] Page 202.

United States hereby put on record their deep concern at the alarming increase of divorce throughout the land. Believing that marriage is an institution intended of God to be as permanent as the life of the parties who enter upon it, we deplore the dissolution of its bonds by human authority, except for the one cause sanctioned by the Saviour. We invite the renewed attention of both ministers and churches to the sanctity of this institution, and urge them to do what lies in their power to put an end to the present wide-spread and corrupting practice of divorce for causes which find no sanction in the word of God.

Temperance.

It was *resolved*, That we commend to the churches the work of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and of all other organizations which are seeking by Christian methods to banish from the land the awful curse of intemperance.

Uniformity in Names of Ecclesiastical Bodies.

It was *voted*, That it is not expedient to take action as to uniformity in the names of local ecclesiastical bodies.

American Home Missionary Society and Congregational Publishing Society.

It was *resolved*, That this Council, recognizing the importance of the Sunday-school work, and of securing harmony in its prosecution, recommend the American Home Missionary Society and the Congregational Publishing Society to confer for the purpose of adjusting more effectually their mutual relations, and securing unity and harmony in the prosecution of that work.

Votes of Thanks.

The following resolutions were adopted: —

Resolved, That the thanks of this Council are hereby expressed to the Merchants' Exchange for its courteous invitation to the body to visit its building.

Resolved, That the heartfelt thanks of this Council be tendered to the people of St. Louis for the considerate and bountiful hospitality shown by them to the members of the Council throughout its sessions, — especially to the Pilgrim church, its pastor and committees, for the thoughtful provision made by them for the convenience and comfort of the members, including postal and telegraphic facilities; to the newspaper press of the city for their full

and accurate reports of the proceedings of the Council; and to the various railroad companies which have made reductions from regular rates of fare to members in attendance, and especially to the St. Louis and San Francisco Railway for the very generous provision made by it for those desiring to visit the Southwest.

Resolved, That the Council makes grateful recognition of the unwearied labors of its officers, — the secretary, the registrar, and the chairman of the business committee.

Resolved, That this Council, recognizing the impartiality and ability of the moderator, expresses its sense of indebtedness to him for the harmony which has resulted from and in its deliberations, and its thanks to him for his service in moderating the sessions of the body.

Responses were made by Rev. Constans L. Goodell, D. D., of St. Louis; Rev. Leander T. Chamberlain, D. D., of the business committee, and by the moderator.

The minutes of the day were read and approved, and the minutes as a whole were approved.

The hymn, "Blest be the tie that binds," was sung.

Rev. Truman M. Post, D. D., of St. Louis, offered prayer and pronounced the benediction, and at 6.45 p. m. the Council adjourned without day.

HENRY M. DEXTER, *Moderator.*

JULIAN M. STURTEVANT, JR., } *Assistant Moderators.*
JOHN D. SMITH, }

WILLIAM H. MOORE, *Registrar.*

JESSE L. FONDA, } *Assistant Registrars.*
WARREN F. DAY, }

SERMON.

BY REV. SAMUEL E. HERRICK, D. D., OF BOSTON, MASS.

"This is an evil generation: they seek a sign." — St. Luke 11: 29.

By the words "this generation," our Saviour meant the great mass of contemporary Jews; and in rating it as an evil generation, he judged it by the samples which came to the top. These Scribes and Pharisees who came to him demanding a sign, were the exponents of certain forces which were at work in the national character. They did not form that character; but were rather the outgrowth, and so the expression of it. They were themselves an "outward and visible sign" of an inward and spiritual fact. The blossoms upon the topmost branches of the tree come out of the sap that is circling through the structure underneath. The unseen chemistry of the remotest fibres reports itself up yonder, beneath the open sky. The hands upon the dial-plate of the town-clock are so closely and constantly related to the movements down below, that what goes on there, out of sight and hearing, is published unmistakably overhead to all the world. Whether false or true to the figures, they are true to the works.

Whether in a civil government, like our own, or in an ecclesiastical polity, like that of the churches convened in this Council, the movements of men in lofty places thus acquire peculiar significance. They are exponential, — representative, in the truest sense. They express and expound the character of the forces which have raised them to their position. They speak of what is going on in our neighborhoods and churches; in our homes and their domestic economies; nay, even in our closets, and in those hidden fountains of personal character, the depths of our own hearts. The pulpit, the politics, the press, the public economy of a nation are, in the main, just what the people want. They are forced upon men by no despot save the despotic craving of their own desires. When the people really feel in their heart of hearts that it is a time to weep, no public clown dares to crack his jests. When the great soul of the nation or the church mourns, no representative buffoon will presume to dance. Conspicuous social phenomena often show what is

passing through the private heart. "Tendencies silently operating on you and me, unmarked by others, unsuspected even by ourselves, may have conspicuous expression in the literature, the taste, the morals of those who claim to be the standards of the age. Lights of self-knowledge may, therefore, flash upon us from the open spaces of the world, and the broad pavement of our time may serve to us as the secret confessional." [1]

So these Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, said Christ within himself, are fairly exhibiting the spirit and temper of the people at large. Their coming and demanding of him a sign so pertinaciously as they did was an evidence of the low religious condition to which the masses of the people had sunk. "This is an evil generation: they seek a sign."

Every period of national history, doubtless, may be distinguished by some inordinate craving, which makes the tone and tendency of the time, which is apt to degenerate into a popular vice, and which may become the prelude to national decay and extinction. At this time we know among the Greeks it was a passion for superficial speculation and eloquent speech: their heroes were orators and sophists. Among the Romans it was a lust after territorial dominion: they deified their emperors and successful generals. And among the Jews it was a craving after the sensuous, the showy, the wonderful in matters pertaining to religion. Through a long course of years — indeed, we might say for centuries — this vicious tendency had been growing. They had left far behind them "the simple fervors of an earnest and prophetic age," and had become a generation of sign-hunters and marvel-mongers. They had arrived at that paradoxical attitude which manifests an intense "interest in the representations of religion, while evading contact with its realities." The magnificent ritual which was intended to be the adumbration of great spiritual realities had overshadowed and wellnigh extruded all moral loyalty, and so, from having been august, had become petty. The shadows and signs of holiness had become real, and holiness itself had become unreal and shadowy. They made much of washing the body, but ignored cleanliness of soul. "Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess." They wrote the letter of the law on their phylacteries, but preserved no reverence for its spirit.

[1] James Martineau.

They made long prayers in public places, but were wanting in real and loving devotion. They held in immense veneration the letters which spelled Jehovah's name,— no human ear ever heard it from their lips; but they ignored the universal presence of that awful Spirit which would have lifted their petty lives into dignity and expanded them into divine generosity. They built and beautified the sepulchres of the prophets whom their fathers had slain, but in spirit were partakers of their fathers' crimes, and shared with them the guilt of shedding righteous blood. They had their canonical hours, canonical robes, and canonical forms of prayer; but they were like the cinders of a flameless altar, their light and warmth gone out. In fine, they had a wonderfully orthodox *theory* of religion; but all that they regarded as worth their while in religion was so much of it as could be seen and heard. And so, when the Messiah came among them, the purity, the gentleness, the peaceful power, the spiritual grace and beauty of the wonderful man all passed for naught; but the signs and wonderful things that he did or did not do, these were the grand reasons why he should be received or rejected. "An evil generation," surely, whose whole character and religion and daily study could be condensed and made perpetually memorable in two words, — σημεῖον ἐπιζητεῖ — they seek a sign.

And any generation that comes to emphasize signs, and rest in them rather than in things signified,— in the external expressions of religion, its forms and phrases, its doings and its noise, rather than in the reality itself,— is an evil generation. It incurs the terrible upbraiding of the Master, "Woe unto you, hypocrites!"

Wherever there is life, it must needs advertise itself, whether the life be natural or spiritual. Nature is full of signs. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge." She does not go about to seek them, to be sure. She has something to express, and expresses it. The smile upon the face of the infant, spontaneously eloquent of a happiness of which it knows neither the meaning nor the cause; the merry shout of boyhood, without articulation or dictionary significance, giving vent to the exuberance of irrepressible mirth; the melody of birds and the bursting buds of spring-time, the outward and visible signs of Nature's invisible and mysterious life; the colors of the sky, attesting by their massing and their changes the marshalling or the disbanding of her stormy forces, — in a word, all natural phenomena are signs.

And there is this to be noticed about them all, without exception: they are signs, indeed. They *signify*, and signify adequately, underlying facts. They are true and righteous altogether. There is no disproportion, no deception, no false pretence. There is no exaggeration and no depreciation of the thing signified. The mass and hue of foliage exactly correspond to the kind and degree of vigor that is in the tree. The shape and marking of the leaf infallibly indicate the family to which it belongs. The bramble never masquerades as an oak. The oak never pretends to assume the humility of the myrtle. So Nature's signs, and all true signs, rise spontaneously out of the real condition of things. They are not assumed; they emanate. A sign that were made, manufactured to order, such as the Pharisees demanded of Christ, would be no *sign*. It would signify nothing. It must come spontaneously out of fact. And so Nature is true, like the God that made her. She never says more than she means. She never hangs out wired flowers. She never acts out of real character.

But when we rise from the realm of unconscious life into that of intelligent action, we find that man has the power, and for the most part the desire, to say somewhat more than he thinks or feels, and to assume to be something more than he is; to make the sign greater than the fact, or even to exhibit the sign when there is nothing to be signified. How vastly different would the world be, socially, politically, morally, spiritually, if all that we see and hear were honest exponents of fact; if there were always wealth corresponding to the signs of wealth, friendship equal to the appearances and professions of friendship, honesty according to honest seeming, honor proportionate to honorable pretence, statesmanship up to the claims of so-called statesmen, and simple morality, even, where religion seems to be!

Now, this tendency to exalt a sign to the place of reality, or (to use a figure suggested by one of the political issues of the hour) to put paper for gold, when it arises in the religious life of a man or a people, is a disastrous thing. When there is self-deception and treachery in religious matters, it will infiltrate downward until it pervades and corrupts all the strata of life. There is no vice whose canker spreads so fast and eats so deep as that of religious hypocrisy. When men or a community begin to emphasize form instead of fact in religion, they are opening the sluice-gates to unnumbered evils, — moral, social, even political. When religion is converted into outward action, then business and society also will inevitably be converted into systematic treachery. There will be

a seeming of wealth, but not wealth; the forms of honesty, but not honesty. There will be sham courtesies, and polite falsehoods, and professions of friendship, and lying flatteries. The life of the people will become a hollow mockery. And this was the reason why Jesus pronounced a woe upon the sign-loving generation of his day. It was not so much a threat as a declaration of the inevitable tendency of their lives of religious sham and pretence. He read out the doom which was being self-written upon the universal spirit of the people. Men may dupe one another, and dupe themselves, but they cannot dupe the everlasting laws of God's universe. Counterfeits may pass sleekly enough for a while in the marts of human ignorance, but they are all rung down sooner or later upon the counter of Heaven, and their career is at an end.

In the age of the Stuarts, an age whose condition was largely such as I have now described, our Congregationalism had its birth; or, rather, as we believe it to have been of primeval origin, perhaps I ought to say its renascence. It came forth as a protest against a religion of the senses, and as putting a new emphasis upon that which is unseen and spiritual. The Fathers cared little for the husks of things, but everything for the kernel. John Cotton, in parting from Old England, to preach in the thatched meeting-house of the first church of Boston, in New England, wafted no sighs of regret behind him for the stately St. Botolph's. Perhaps we may have queried at times whether, in their eagerness to exscind all signs that did not signify, they did not trim the vine of the church's life too close; whether they might not have left here and there some gracefully hanging boughs and delicate tendrils, which would have conciliated the men and women and children of very sensitive, æsthetic nature. But when we remember that the church had become like an overladen beast of burden, that is intolerant even of straws; that things easy enough to bear when they are the natural forth-putting and expression of life, like the wings of a bird, become insufferable weights when bound on by the cords of exterior obligation, we justify and thank them. "The church had become incrusted with many successive layers of corrupt innovation. For ages these accretions had been forming one upon another. The wish of the Puritans was to peel off these laminæ, and to remove them all, till they should come down to the original, proper substance of the church. They were for unwinding the interminable mummy-cloths by which the church had been nearly bandaged into a corpse, and so restoring her to life and

enjoyment, to beauty and action. They followed the plan of stripping off all those usages which could not plead the recorded inspiration of the Bible in their favor. They rejected every canon and custom of whose origin they could tell the date and of whose originators they could give the names. And when all these foreign, uncongenial, and injurious inventions, which had been superimposed upon the primitive discipline, had been removed, they found, as the result, our noble Congregational Church Polity." [1]

And this was heroic treatment, and in a sense dangerous; dangerous to them and to their successors forever. It bequeathed to our churches a function and a duty the alternative to which would in all future time be worse than extinction. It held up the fathers themselves to a high style of spiritual life, and laid the same necessity upon those who should come after them. From that time to this the obligation resting upon Congregationalism has been to stand as a witness for the worth and necessity of spiritual religion in the world. Its motto has been: "Not the sign, but the fact." "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." It seeks to appeal, not to the lust of the eye or to the pride of life, but to the chastened imagination, the faith, the heart of mankind. Its religion must be a spiritual religion, or it is less than nothing, and vanity. It builds no cathedral, that shall awe by the stately grandeur of its architecture, and marshals through long-drawn aisles no processions of lawned and mitred prelates; it adopts no elaborate cultus, and sets forth no venerable liturgy or prayers of exquisite beauty; it claims no exclusive descent through the chrism of sacerdotal or prelatic impartation, and for the most part wears no distinctive garb; it has nothing about it sacramentarian or ritualistic; it has no majestic machinery of government, — boasts, indeed, as little organization as possible; it depends solely upon the gospel, which it holds forth in word and life, for its power and propagation. Therefore, it is most excellent, or it is most execrable. If it have not the faith, the indwelling power of the Spirit of God, it has nothing. Other systems, if they have not life, may preserve its semblance, or, at least, the appearance of seemly and decorous decay; but Congregationalism cannot die decently. It has provided itself beforehand

1 Life of John Cotton, by A. W. McClure, page 47.

with no seemly grave-clothes. Without the inner and spiritual reality, it is hideous and repulsive. Other churches may be corpses, but if so, they are corpses rolled in linen, corpses embalmed in sweet-smelling spices, corpses adorned with flowers. But the corpse of Congregationalism is nothing but a corpse, — cold, odious, repulsive. As soon as it is dead, men know it and flee from it. By as much as it is most excellent in its normal and vital development, by so much is it most worthless when reduced to its lowest terms.

And yet it has and must have, by the analogy of all life, its signs. As an intellectual force, it has made for itself a history and a literature of which it needeth not to be ashamed. It has given much, but borrowed little, in this respect. The penetrant and diffusive power of its thinking has passed through or over all denominational boundaries. Its boughs have overhung the walls, and men have plucked its clusters without stint upon the other side. The Edwardses, Bellamy, Hopkins, Emmons, Dwight, Taylor, Beecher, Bushnell, — how their thoughts have become as an atmosphere for the world to breathe! The Presbyterian, Dr. Finley, could only explain the premature death of the elder Edwards, in his fifty-fifth year, by saying: "He was pouring in a flood of light upon mankind, which their eyes as yet were unable to bear." Twenty years ago, or more, I went to call upon a ripe theologian of another order, and found him reclining upon his couch, in the incipient stages of what proved to be his last illness, absorbed in a volume that had been recently published. And his first remark was: "A wonderful man, this Bushnell. He takes hold of me."

Nor has the *spiritual* vitality of our order, as distinguished from its intellectual, been wanting in external manifestations. Tides of spiritual influence, coming and going like the wind that bloweth where it listeth, have borne witness at times — though at intervals too infrequent, it must be confessed — to the indwelling presence and power of the Holy Ghost.

And, finally, the life of the denomination has, during the current century, been attested as never before in a more adequate appreciation of the significance of our Saviour's last command, in the consecration of its wealth to the work of God's Kingdom in the world and in its far-reaching missionary operations.

These are our signs, and in the main we may believe that they have not been assumed or sought after, but have been true signs, outward and visible, of inward and spiritual fact. They have been

not attachments to, but expressions of, the church's hidden life. By these things our faith and order have professed a good profession before many witnesses.

But we may by no means complacently assume, my brethren, that because our religious life has expressed itself after such a lofty manner, rather than in those minor matters which appeal to the eyes and ears of men, therefore we are free from the sign-seeking and sign-loving spirit which our Saviour condemns. The danger is more subtle on this very account. The tendency which is common to human nature, rather than peculiar to any system of order or doctrine, may be all the more likely to seize and infect us that we reject all signs of a grosser sort. Just as those who have least visible virtue to boast of often boast the loudest; just as those who have little wealth to be complacent over are often most intensely complacent over the little they have; or as a hen with one chicken is notably more fussy than one with a multitudinous brood, — so those who abjure a multiplicity of outward insignia may become unduly conceited over the few tokens they exhibit. And you will bear with me, fathers and brethren, if I indicate what seem to me to be a few of the peculiar sources of our danger, leaving it to your own insight to discern, or to your ingenuity to suggest, any others for yourselves.

There are three or four directions in which the sign-seeking and sign-loving spirit is peculiarly likely to be developed among us. And

1. In the endeavor to *say more than is actually felt or thought.* Utterance, when used aright, is a most important aid, both to feeling and to faith. When it is purely and simply an expression of these, and nothing more, it reacts upon them, — becomes most beneficently reflexive. It strengthens and confirms the interior life from which it springs, as the foliage of the tree, exactly expressing its hidden energy, in turn increases that energy and helps it forward to a new degree. A thought fitly uttered becomes more certainly the thinker's own. A feeling adequately expressed is thereby deepened and intensified. When a man can say, "I believed, and therefore and thus I have spoken," he may almost immediately reverse the assertion, and say, "I have spoken, and therefore I so believe." But it is to be questioned whether men generally are content, at least in religious matters, to limit their utterance by faith and feeling. Religious expression is very apt to be disproportionate to the facts upon which it is based. Not that

men are intentionally dishonest in this matter. They fall into the error unconsciously. Perhaps the explanation is to be found along this line. Recognizing, at least theoretically, that real spiritual religion is the best of all possessions, and what they ought to possess in the fullest measure of their capacity, good men are ashamed that they have so little of it; and they are unconsciously tempted to make up in appearance for what they lack in reality, — *i. e.*, they multiply the signs. Just as many a man who does not like to pass on 'Change for what he is really worth — it is so little it would hurt his credit, it might damage his social position — is tempted to keep up the appearances and signs of wealth, so men in their religious life, it is to be feared, are sometimes led to express emotions which they do not feel, to utter petitions for which they really have in their hearts no corresponding desires, and to profess as their creed what they neither intelligently, nor fully, nor even for substance believe. An inversion, surely, of the order of nature and of grace. Multiplying signs cannot develop life. Increasing life will develop signs. And the evil is not confined to the individual. It runs up through the church and into the great assemblies of the associated churches. Great aggregations of men, assembled in religious conference for public action, who are bound together by the sympathies of common origin, common traditions, common faith, and venerable history, are notably apt to say somewhat more than they believe. It is said, and I know no reason to doubt it, that a large number of delegates to the Vatican Council went there wholly opposed to the doctrine of Papal Infallibility; yet in the final vote only one or two voted against it. What glamour was there about the whining, decrepit old man that changed the belief of these men so suddenly? None at all. They believed after they had said their *credo* just as they had before. Creeds are not to be manufactured. They grow, as the worlds are grown, by great secular development. They change their forms imperceptibly to the eye of the contemporary beholder. They emanate from the closets, from the pages of tear-stained Bibles, from the chambers of solitary suffering, from the midnight Bethels, where uncrowned princes prevail with the Angel of the Covenant, and get new names in new and mighty experiences. They come from those serene and silent heights where long-trained and long-watching eyes have at last beheld the nebulous hint revealing itself in stellar distinctness and beauty. Not infrequently they are precipitated in the fires of persecution, or come forth, no man can tell how, from age-long conflict between the

church of God and the forces of surrounding evil. Literature, even secular and profane, government and politics, commerce and international intercourse, each adds its touch to the growing thing. No *true* creed was ever *made*. Ridiculous story that, about that most venerable symbol, the so-called Apostles' Creed, being constructed as men would frame a barn, each apostle bringing his timber over his shoulder. Such manufacturing has been attempted since, at various times, and very likely will be attempted again. But it reminds one of that terrible sarcasm of the old prophet about the manufacture of idols. "The workman melteth a graven image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished, that he hath no oblation [no gold or silver of his own to bring] chooseth a tree that will not rot [if it be bog-oak, exhumed from some ancient fen, so much the better]; he seeketh unto him a cunning workman to prepare a graven image, that shall not be moved. They helped every one his neighbor. So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil, saying, It is ready for the soldering, and he fastened it with nails, that it should not be moved."

When the church has a mighty faith, it will have a mighty creed. When it does not believe much, the temptation is strong, lest men should find it out, to set about telling how much it does believe.

Let no one misinterpret me as not believing in creeds. I do. I must have one. I am only contending that it shall be no more or less than simply exponential. I would have no part of it to be uttered below the breath. I would have it express less than is really believed, rather than more. It should grow wholly up out of the roots of actual faith; should be *ex animo* to the least article, with not a syllable wired on for effect, as we sometimes see at feasts flowers and fruit wired for show upon dead twigs.

2. The same spirit is peculiarly likely to be developed among us *in frantic endeavors to exhibit spiritual vitality.*

Those tides of spiritual influence which now and then pass over the churches, known as revivals of religion, doubtless rise and fall in accordance with a law as fixed as that of the rhythm of the waters of the globe or the movement of the seasons. Scripture itself seems to recognize the fact. The voice of the beloved to his bride, — "Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For, lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the

turtle is heard in our land," — has always been regarded as the poetic expression of the great spiritual truth. This rhythmic character of the spiritual life is something which belongs to man as truly as the systole and diastole of the blood which flows in his veins. "Tell me not," says a venerable thinker, renowned for his wonderful power of spiritual intuition, — almost like that of a St. John,[1] — "tell me not that these undulations of the soul are the mere instability of enthusiasm and infirmity. Are they not found characteristically in the greatest and deepest men, — Augustine, Tauler, Luther? Nay, did not the Son of God himself, the very type of our humanity, experience them more than all? Did he not quit the daily path, now for a transfiguration and now for a Gethsemane? Did not his voice burst into the exclamation, 'I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven,' yet also confess, 'Now is my soul troubled'? And had he not his hours on the mountain all night? And what think you passed beneath those stars? Ah, no! Those intermittent movements are the sign of divine gifts, not of human weakness. God has so arranged the chronometry of our spirits that there shall be thousands of silent moments between the striking hours." But I well remember that in the old-fashioned household clock in the home of my boyhood there was a wire let down, which, by certain manipulation, would cause the old timepiece to strike at any time and any number of times, between the true striking hours. And it used to be my mischievous delight to strike the old clock around, greatly to the confusion of all who depended upon it for time, and equally to the injury of the abused machinery. It struck at length without proper cause, and upon all sorts of improper occasions. It became utterly treacherous and false. Its old-time dignity and solemnity gave place to garrulity and bad faith. All signs, and no truth in any of them!

We have made much, and rightly, of those high-striking hours which have marked the progress of the church's spiritual life. We hail their coming with joy and gratitude unspeakable. But may it not admit of question, my brethren, whether, in our eagerness after signs, we do not take the chronometer into our own hands and try to strike it around for ourselves? May it not admit of question whether tendencies are not being developed more or less broadly in our churches which are displacing the true revival spirit by a weak and dangerous counterfeit? Is there not a spirit abroad which depre-

[1] James Martineau.

ciates the normal and beautiful rhythm of the Spirit's work, by demanding that if signs are not abundantly apparent, they shall be created? that if the leaven of the Kingdom be not spreading evidently upon the surface, we shall throw in certain powders of our own to produce a yeasty and effervescent commotion? God forbid that I should utter a single word in disparagement of those movements of the heavenly breath which He sends from time to time to quicken his people and to convince and convert the world. "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out." But God has honored for ages the constitution and orderly methods of his church; and he will honor them still. Not fitfulness, but faithfulness, is the condition and the characteristic of life. And when faithfulness pervades the life of our churches, as the law of its formation pervades the structure of the calc-spar crystal from the unit of its mass down to its minutest fragment; when men are *simply faithful* in the pulpit, in the Sunday school, in the prayer-meeting, in the family, in the closet, and in the daily business of their lives, no factitious signs will be sought for or desired to vindicate the sufficiency of the church for the work that is given her to do, — the work of redeeming and renovating the world.

3. The same spirit is often developed in *an undue regard for uncertain or even false measures of strength.* I mean numerical measures.

The time has long passed by when Congregationalism could make more than a feeble showing in the census of religious denominations. Nor do I know that we ought very much to care, — if indeed we ought not to be glad. The fact may put us upon the endeavor to secure a more excellent dynamic than that of which numbers are the criterion. This counting is a heinous and radical vice. We count our attendance at prayer-meeting, the scholars in the Sunday-school class and in the school, the church attendance in rain and shine, the increasing or diminishing number of churches, and the whole number of communicants in them all, and the grand total is cause for a shout of congratulation or a wail of despair; when it may very likely be true that the life of the churches would be of a better quality, — more forceful and more fruitful, — if we could be rid of some thousands that are as cumbrous as dead wood to a growing tree. Numbers are weakness sometimes. I remember that a famous band of Hebrew warriors were but a handful, compared with the hosts against whom they had to contend. I

remember that that handful of three hundred were sifted men, from whom as chaff and refuse twenty-and-two thousand had been separated as fearful and afraid, and then more than nine thousand more, leaving a little fragment, who had their own way of doing things, even to lapping water from the brook. I remember that of a certain feeble town it was said: "Thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, art little among the thousands of Judah; yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that shall rule in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old: from everlasting." I remember that it is written in the Book of God, and on every page of secular history, that "God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." I remember that a few, with God, have been, through all recorded time, a conquering and unconquerable host. I am not of those who grudgingly count the dollars that we have put into union societies for other denominations to control and to spend, or who regretfully speak of men who have gone out from us to build up churches for another order, or who reproachfully look after the leaders whom our institutions have trained for pulpits of a different name. Has the grand cause for which we all are laboring been thereby weakened? Much as we love Congregationalism, do we not love the kingdom of our Redeemer more? Shall we not count it a privilege and an honor that — at the cost of our own numbers and our own wealth — we have been permitted for a hundred years to diffuse the leaven of our thought and spirit, and so prepare for the coming of the time when none shall say, "I am of Paul," or "I of Apollos," or "I of Cephas," but when all shall confess, "I am of Christ." There is hardly to be imagined a more fallacious exponent of true strength than the footing up of statistical tables. They are treacherous signs. Let the sign-mongers adopt and cherish them. The apostles of the early church left us their figures up to the time of Pentecost. After that they soon forgot to count. The Arabic signs are not used in heaven, nor do the balances of the sanctuary weigh avoirdupois. When piety and spiritual power and the diffusive energy of holy character can be measured by yards and bushels and thermometer scales, figures will tell the truth when applied to the life and growth of the churches. God tells us what he thinks

of human calculations when he says that a little one shall become a thousand and a small one a strong nation. The beneficent forces which he sends forth for the blessings of nature and of man mock figures, both by their insignificance and their might. The handful of corn waves like Lebanon. And out of this fact grows the last danger that I shall mention, viz. : —

4. That the spirit which our Saviour deprecated asserts itself *in complacency at the magnitude of external machinery and visible success.*

The gigantic growths of the Sierras are products of a teacupful of pine seed, wafted thither in some inconspicuous fashion, no man can tell when or whence or how. They have become the wonder of the world. Like these in their magnitude, so apparently disproportionate to their feeble origin, are the great societies and their work which have sprung out of the faith and prayer of our churches within the current century. They are signs of a wonderful vitality in the past. Had the faith and order of our fathers given birth to no other offspring than the Board with the alphabetical name, they would have vindicated their claim to the recognition and gratitude of all the world. But in the light of this discussion, is it not quite possible that these admirable boards of ours, from being real exponents, may come to be simply the boast of an "evil generation"? They are the forth-reaching, far-reaching hands by which the churches do the Lord's commissioned work. But what were a giant's hands to him if the giant's heart and brain were atrophied or paralyzed? What to the country or to the world were the magnificent river on whose bank we are assembled, if all the secret mountain springs should cease their flow by day and night? It was whispered to me that in a meeting of the Woman's Board of Missions, the other day, — which we men, you know, were not privileged to attend, — the president said to the assembled ladies: "I want to tell you a secret. It is a matter I have never mentioned before. The secret is that of the wonderful success of the Woman's Board. Several of the ladies, many of whom have now passed away, have had regular seasons, some weekly, some daily, of private prayer for our work from its very inception. And now I am constrained to mention this because there must be others to come in and fill the thinning ranks of these persistent supplicants."

Is there any monument of antiquity more sadly suggestive than that famous sculpture on the Arch of Titus which represents the

Golden Candlestick of the Jewish Temple, borne upon the shoulders of exultant heathen, — the reminiscence of a dead religion, the epitaph of a nation that perished because it loved its signs more than the hidden life they were intended to set forth?

We have our seven-branched candlestick, and we may rejoice that its beams shine so brightly and penetrate so far. But the principal thing about the candlestick is the oil by which its branches are secretly fed; and that is not in the legacies of Otises and Smiths, but in the ten thousand green olive-trees which strike their roots down in secret places all over the land. It is in the spiritual life of faith and prayer, lived in thousands of inconspicuous homes and tens of thousands of hallowed oratories, which witness an unbroken commerce with the skies. Let us interrupt that commerce, to admire the superb structure of our candlestick, or to waste our energies in its laudation, or in strife about the pre-eminence of its branches, and the very heathen shall hold up in exultant mockery the quenched and empty symbols of our preterite faith.

The subject, therefore, my brethren, comes home personally to every one of us. Signs of life are not life, because they may be manufactured. Life itself is the breath of God moving upon the soul of man, humbled at his feet, lying open to his free and gracious and constant inspiration. In an organization like ours, the individual is peculiarly the unit of influence, not the church or the minister. The denomination must be what its humblest members are. The consecration of the whole is in the fidelity of its elements. Let us make our order a power *for* God, by receiving into our own souls the power *of* God. Let us each adopt for himself that which, on the eve of his ordination, Charles Kingsley laid down as his special rule in life, in these words, worthy to be graven on the heart of every minister and every layman with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond: "To be an example and an instrument of holiness before the Lord forever; to dwell in his courts; to preach in his temple; to feed his sheep; to carry his lambs and bear them to their Foster-Mother, whose love never fails, whose eye never sleeps, — the Bride of God, the Church of Christ."

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES.

CONGREGATIONAL UNION OF ENGLAND AND WALES,
MEMORIAL HALL AND CONGREGATIONAL LIBRARY,
FARRINGDON STREET, LONDON, E. C., October 20, 1880.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have pleasure in forwarding you a copy of a resolution moved by the Rev. J. B. Paton, M. D., and seconded by James Spicer, Esq., I. P., and carried unanimously at the meeting of the Assembly of the Congregational Union of England and Wales held in Birmingham last week: —

"That the Assembly, looking forward to the celebration of the Jubilee of the Union in the year 1881–2, and anxious to make the occasion subservient to the interest of Congregationalism in all parts of the world, instruct the committee to take steps to secure as large a representation as possible at the autumnal meetings of 1881 of the Congregational churches of the United States of America, and of the colonies of Great Britain and other parts of the world, as well as of Scotland and Ireland, with power to include in any invitation that may be issued, the churches of the Evangelical Union of Scotland.

"That this Union further desires to convey, through its beloved and honored secretary, the Rev. Alexander Hannay, to the Congregationalists of the United States, in their approaching convention at St. Louis, assurance of strong fraternal regard. Mr. Hannay carries with him the hearty confidence and sincere affection of the Union which he is deputed to represent. As no one is in more thorough sympathy with all the thought and life of English Congregationalism, or has done more by his eminent abilities and devoted and self-sacrificing service to advance its great work, this Union feels that he is peculiarly fitted to bind more closely the bonds of Christian fellowship between the two great confederations of Congregational churches, which, though separated by the ocean, still preserve, in the absence of any formal bond of association, the most profound reverence for the memory of their common ecclesiastical ancestry, and an unshaken loyalty to those principles for which their fathers struggled so nobly on this side of the Atlantic, and under the inspiration of which they contributed so largely to the foundation of the glorious Republic of America."

Trusting that the presence of the Master may be felt in the approaching convention,

I am very sincerely yours,

ANDREW MEARNS.

The REV. DR. DEXTER.

REPORT OF THE PROVISIONAL COMMITTEE.

The provisional committee, appointed by the Council of 1877 to make arrangements for this meeting, in accordance with the requirements of the By-Laws respectfully report: —

That during the three years they have appointed delegates to various corresponding bodies, who have attended to the duties committed to them, and who will report to this Council either personally or by letter.

They have filled vacancies in various offices as follows: —

January 23, 1879, Rev. Dr. Henry M. Dexter was induced to accept the office of treasurer, in place of Charles Demond, resigned. As this involved the advancing of several thousand dollars, the committee was thus temporarily relieved from a most embarrassing perplexity. Dr. Dexter remained a member of the publishing committee, as the treasurer was such *ex officio*, and his personal membership on that committee was replaced by the election of Rev. Henry A. Hazen, of Massachusetts. Hon. Horace Fairbanks early resigned his membership in the provisional committee, and Rev. Prof. Egbert C. Smyth, of Massachusetts, was chosen a member April 5, 1879, and Hon. Amos C. Barstow, of Rhode Island, was made chairman. Professor Smyth was also placed upon the publishing committee in place of Hon. Franklin Fairbanks, resigned. Hon. James B. Angell has not been able to attend the meetings of the committee, by reason of his duties as United States Minister to China.

The committee, by meetings and diligent correspondence, has made preparations for this session as follows: —

It accepted the cordial invitation to meet with the Pilgrim Church, St. Louis, Mo., on Thursday, November 11, 1880, at half past ten o'clock A. M., with the expectation that the sessions would, in accordance with the wish of the last Council, continue into the following week.

It chose Rev. Samuel E. Herrick, D. D., of Boston, Mass., to preach the opening sermon.

It selected topics regarding the Christian work of the churches as follows: —

A paper upon the "New West," by Rev. F. A. Noble, D. D., of Chicago.

A paper upon the "Relation of the Church and Missions," by Rev. L. T. Chamberlain, D. D., of Connecticut.

A paper upon the question, "Is it desirable for the purposes of truth and Christian education, that a statement be prepared of the doctrinal belief of the churches, in the forms of a declaration of faith and of a catechism?"

No more topics were proposed, inasmuch as the action of the Council of 1877 will require reports from committees, as follows: —

Upon the paper of 1877 upon the Parish System.

Upon a conference with the American Congregational Union.

Upon Ministerial Responsibility and Standing.

Upon Pastorless Churches and Churchless Pastors.

As to Disabled Ministers.

As to Absentee Church Members.

As to a monument to Rev. John Robinson.

The committee has thought it well to suggest that the Council would gladly welcome a delegate from the Congregational Union of England, and is able to report that Rev. Alexander Hannay, secretary of that Union, is in attendance. The committee also believed that Messrs. Eugene Reveillaud and Rev. George T. Dodds would be welcomed in presenting to this Council the appeal of Protestantism in France, and these brethren will be present.

The publishing committee, which has acted in entire harmony with this committee, will present a full report, which this committee commends particularly to the favor of the Council.

SECRETARY'S REPORT.

The report of the secretary need not be long. The annual statistics of the ministers and churches have been published, and although the Year-Book of 1880 unfortunately did not give the specific figures from each church, — that expense in printing might be avoided, — yet the secretary prepared the "copy" as usual, and from that made up the general summaries in the usual form.

The tables as made up show in three years: —

1. As to churches: 334 new churches were organized, and 169 dropped from the roll. Net gain, 165. Total churches, 3,674.

2. As to members: Net gain, 17,325. Total, 382,920.

3. As to additions: On profession, 61,325, which was nearly 8,000 more than in the three years reported at Detroit.

4. As to Sunday schools: Net gain of persons, 15,560, not quite one half the net gain reported at Detroit for three years.

5. Amount of moneys raised: No data are sufficiently complete to be exact, inasmuch as some States do not report. But the amount reported is about the same — certainly with no diminution — as reported in 1877, when the totals indicated over $5,000,000 a year.

A single suggestion from our figures is, that any considerable advance in our churches is uniformly dependent on revivals, and not on common growth.

One feature in our statistics deserves careful thought. We had reports last year as follows:—

Churches with pastors, 898; with acting pastors, 1,893. Vacant (including 200 supplied by licentiates and ministers of other denominations), 883. Total, 3,674.

It appears thus that little more than one quarter of our churches have pastors. We understand what it means, however; viz., that this one quarter is of pastors installed by council. 1,893 are called acting pastors. In one sense most of them *are*, — they act as pastors, and act remarkably to the edification of the churches and the conversion of souls.

The desire for a "settled pastorate," so called, is very strong in many parts of our land. In many parts what is meant by "settled," *i. e.*, by a formal council, is out of the question. As a whole, will the churches and ministers return to the rigidity of a system amply sufficient when scarce a church existed beyond the sound of the Atlantic surf?

In answer it will be seen that when the statistics began to be tolerably full, in 1858, we had 947 churches with settled pastors, or 49 *more* than now; and we then had 1,359 *less churches*. That is, an increase of 1,359 churches gives us less *pastors* than in 1858.

It is perfectly clear that the churches will *not* return to the old system. Only *three* States now have more pastors than acting pastors. Some States refuse to *notice* the distinction. Here and there some brother objects to the membership in a council of an acting pastor, but such objections are almost obsolete.

It remains to consider whether the invidious distinction of "p." and "a. p." in our statistics should remain unamended and unqual-

ified. Many a brother, as efficient, as permanently settled as any other, is called "acting pastor," when in the hearts of a loving people and in the respect of the community the title is devotion to technicality. Is it not wise to consider whether there is not as safe a way in considering as *pastor* a minister called by a church, accepting the call, entering upon his duties, — not for a month, of course, but with a view to permanence, — as much as in a formal installation by council, taking care that there be some suitable recognition by his neighbors? I merely suggest this, from my own observation in twenty years' care of our statistics, both for the better security of churches, by some form of recognition which should be a safeguard now unknown, and as a relief to brethren who may be entitled to the *name* of pastor as they are to its fruits. The compiler of the national statistics can make no such change. He has no authority to alter, insert, omit a name of church or minister, a title or a figure; and I recommend that a committee be appointed to consider whether any suggestions can wisely be made to the State Associations in this direction.

REPORT OF THE PUBLISHING COMMITTEE.

The Congregational churches of the United States, by elders and messengers assembled in session in their third National Council, at Detroit, in 1877, unanimously voted "that an annual compilation of the statistics of our churches throughout the country, and especially an accurate and complete list of ministers in fellowship," be published under the sanction of the Council, those churches being requested to contribute through their several State bodies for this purpose, and for the publication of the minutes of the doings of that Council, at the rate of one cent per member. It appointed a publishing committee of five persons, to have "the charge and oversight of the publishing of the doings of the Council, the compilation and publication of statistics, and the distribution of the same," leaving to the discretion of that committee whether this distribution be free to the churches, in which case the treasurer was authorized to ask a contribution from those churches of an additional half-cent per member for 1879, and again for 1880.

That publishing committee beg leave to report as to the manner in which they have discharged the duty thus laid upon them, with their reasons for the same.

It becomes obvious to careful examination that the Council's votes were mandatory in their terms, leaving the committee no discretion as to the two points: First, that the minutes of the Detroit session be published in full; and second, that an official issue of "accurate and complete statistics" be annually made, the committee's discretion being confined to the manner in which that duty should be performed.

Those statistics having for several previous years been published by individual enterprise in the January number of the *Congregational Quarterly*, your committee naturally felt a strong desire, if possible, to adjust this new official issue with the proprietor of that journal, in the kindest and most liberal spirit; and after full and friendly conference, an agreement was effected with him, through which, in consideration of a pecuniary compensation, with the concession that his publication of the statistics should be allowed to reach the public in advance of that of the committee, his free consent was given to the course proposed by the committee, with the additional pledge that they should have the fullest right to make such publication thereafter without further consideration of his interests in the matter.

It will not be new to most of the members of this body that when the committee had concluded their first annual act of obedience to their instructions, and printed the MINUTES for 1878, they found themselves confronted with a volume instead of a pamphlet, whose cost, undelivered, rose to over seventy cents per copy, and whose bulk and weight made its delivery so expensive as to interfere seriously with its usefulness, this although having no liberty of revision, omission, or condensation, they had printed in it only what they had been ordered to print in it. On the 1st of May following (1878), when the printer's bills for this work of over $2,800 became due, the treasury had received, in response to the Council's request to the churches to contribute toward that expense, less than $700 with which to meet the obligation. The then treasurer declining to advance money, or in any way as an individual to take steps for the relief of the difficulty, as a last resort a treasurer's note, indorsed by three members of the committee, was negotiated at a heavy discount, and the burden thus shifted from the shoulders of the printer to those of the committee.

In the early winter following, when the committee were called upon to settle the question of the publication of the statistics for 1879, the sum of $1,427.05 only had come in in further instalments

from the churches, leaving nearly $1,300 still due on the treasurer's note aforesaid, with some other unsettled claims upon the treasury. All considerations of personal comfort would have persuaded the committee to leave matters as they were, pay as best they might the obligations outstanding, and prepare themselves to report at the present time, that the Council having instructed them to do a work for whose necessary expenses it had made no adequate provision, they had not seen their way clear to further action. It did not, however, seem to them that such a course would be most honorable to themselves, most creditable to Congregationalism among the sisterhood of the family of Christ, or most acceptable to the churches. It was further known to them to be improbable, should they fail to make the publication required by the Council, that any publication of the statistics of the churches would be made, the proprietor of the *Quarterly* being in so feeble health as to imperil his own life and the continuance of his journal. The committee, however, had conference with him as to the terms on which he would undertake to do the official work on their behalf, with the result of his offer to furnish them with any desired number of the January issue of the *Quarterly* containing the statistics as before, for *fifty cents* per copy. As about 4,000 copies would be needed for compliance with the instructions of the Council to send a copy to every church, and for other uses of the body, this arrangement would render needful an expenditure of $2,000, with no income from advertisements to mitigate that expenditure. It was further strongly felt by the committee that the best interests of Congregationalism, especially at the West, demanded an official *Year Book*, complete in itself, and disconnected with any magazine; that, properly managed, important aid from advertising could be had to assist in bearing its cost, provided a large and free circulation were guaranteed; and that a generous policy, which should lodge one copy, postage paid, in the hands of every church and every minister on its lists, would prove acceptable to, and would be sustained by, the churches. That policy was accordingly determined on, and the work commenced. When partially finished, — when, indeed, the page which was to bear the names of the officers of the Council was waiting to be printed, — the treasurer elected at Detroit suddenly resigned, under circumstances which, however painful as affecting his personal character, and the pecuniary condition of another organization of which he was also treasurer,

fortunately involved no pecuniary loss to the Council. The provisional committee, with whom in this emergency by the constitution rested the responsibility of filling the vacant place, after looking in vain for a "business man" willing to assume the trust, selected one of their own number, who, not a "business man," and to the last degree indisposed to undertake the care and risk, consented for the general good to fill the gap and do his best. This adjusted, the *Year Book* of 1879 was speedily completed and published. Its cost proved to be — including the cost of editing and the extremely moderate payment to the secretary for the preparation of the statistics — a trifle over thirty-seven cents a copy, while a little over $700 net was realized from its advertisements toward the payment of its bills.

When, in the early winter of the last year, the committee were called upon to settle the question of future action, the prospect had not brightened much over the previous year. Over $700 remained due, by note, to the printer for the issue of 1879, aside from a considerable indebtedness for other claims or disbursements; and once more the question arose of an inglorious retreat from the field, leaving the churches — as confirmed ill-health had led its proprietor to conclude the publication of the *Quarterly* — without any news from each other, and leaving the Council's instruction to publish annually the official statistics without further attempt at obedience. Once more the committee decided to sacrifice personal comfort to their conviction of the general good, and go forward — reducing as much as possible its size and cost — to issue the *Year Book* of 1880. This was done at the average cost of 24 cents a copy, or 30 cents delivered, postage paid; while they were able also to realize the sum of $863.34 (net) from advertising toward payment of the printer. They did not regard this *Year Book* of 1880 as in any sense an ideal issue, but they did think it was better than none.

The Council has already heard from the treasurer's report that the treasury has been long and largely overdrawn, and that something over $1,500 remains unpaid of the one cent requested through the State bodies from each church-member for 1878, and the half-cent from each church member for 1879 and 1880.

It should, in all fairness, be remembered that this condition of things by no means implies any special dissatisfaction on the part of the churches with the financial plan voted to be pursued by the Council, or reluctance to bear their share of the same. That plan itself is vicious, in that it involved long delay. The meetings of

the State bodies did not occur until many months after the adjournment of the Council, while several further months must naturally elapse — if those bodies favorably entertained the Council's request — before the answering collections could begin to come in. Under the most favorable circumstances, therefore, nearly or quite a year must elapse after the adjournment of the Council, before the money which it had made arrangements to raise could become available for its liabilities, while necessary expenditure must begin at once. The publishing committee were thus driven to contract with publishers at high rates, because obliged to ask long credit for the work, while the expense must of course be still further increased by the payment of interest.

Under all the circumstances, your committee feel that to be able to report that out of nearly $7,500 solicited by the last Council of the churches, only about $1,500 now remains unpaid, is an encouraging and gratifying circumstance, warranting the hope that those churches whose contributions have not yet reached the treasury may yet be favorably heard from in regard to the same; and that with a better adjustment of the system it may be relied on in the future to accomplish the desired work.

In conclusion, the committee venture the following suggestions as the fruit of their experience, viz.: —

1. As worthy of inquiry whether it may not be possible to arrange some plan whereby all the statistics of the Congregational churches in the several States be collected simultaneously, say in the month of September of each year.

2. Whether money enough be not now annually wasted in the "setting up" *twice* of these annual statistics (once in each State and once for the Council's official register) nearly or quite to pay for the issue of a *Year Book*.

3. Whether an arrangement be not possible by which all the statistics be forwarded in manuscript, as soon as gathered and tabulated, to the secretary of the Council, to be by him put in type once for all for the *Year Book*, stereotype plates to be at once taken and forwarded to the States for use in their minutes, thus aiding cheapness and accuracy, and making possible on the 1st of January of each year an accurate and complete list of the statistics of the churches for the September previous.

Respectfully submitted for the committee,

HENRY M. DEXTER, *Chairman.*

TREASURER'S REPORT. 1878–1880.

HENRY M. DEXTER, *Treasurer*, IN ACCOUNT WITH THE NATIONAL COUNCIL CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES, U. S. A.

TREASURER HAS RECEIVED:

Oct. 1877, Balance remaining in treasury from last account,		$39 60
Received from the churches for expenses of National Council, as follows: —		
ALABAMA, [24 July, 1880]	$14 14	
CALIFORNIA, [11 Sept. 1879]	42 63	
COLORADO, [6 Dec. 1877] $3.44; [22 July, 1878] $3.66; [13 March, 1880] $1.00	8 10	
CONNECTICUT, [13 Feb. 1878] $533.08; [1 March, 1879] $400; [5 May, 1879] $158.52; [6 Jan. 1880] $273.21	1,364 81	
DAKOTA, [19 Sept. 1878] $4.00; [22 March, 1880] $3.54	7 54	
GEORGIA, [29 March, 1880] $7.65; [10 May, 1880] $5.00	12 65	
ILLINOIS, [24 June, 1878] $225.90; [27 June, 1879] $113.59; [9 April, 1880] fr. E. Ebbs, $1.80; [5 June, 1880] $105.14	446 43	
INDIANA, [3 May, 1878] $14.95; [31 May, 1879] $16.80; [22 May, 1880] $2.78	34 53	
IOWA, [10 July, 1879] $138.63; [13 Feb. 1880] $40; [17 July, 1880] $125.32	303 95	
MAINE, [24 May, 1879] $100; [17 June, 1879] $95.85; [April, 1880] D. D. Tappan, $1.00; T. S. Perry, $1.50; [22 July] $50	248 35	
MASSACHUSETTS, [18 Oct. 1878] $985; [15 July, 1879] $300; [31 Dec. 1879] $14.80; [19 Aug. 1880] $491.21	1,791 01	
MICHIGAN, [14 June, 1878] $111.65; [26 Nov. 1878] $21.22; [11 Sept. 1880] $131.90	264 77	
MINNESOTA, [28 June, 1880] $90.33; [16 Aug. 1880] $33.09	123 42	
MISSISSIPPI, [1 Nov. 1880]	2 81	
MISSOURI, [4 May, 1878] $22.55; [19 Sept. 1878] $10.93; [2 Jan. 1879] $3.69; [2 July, 1880] $35.47	72 64	
NEBRASKA, [1 Nov. 1879] $28.36; [4 Nov. 1880] $27.67	56 03	
NEW HAMPSHIRE, [29 July, 1878] $9.91; [12 Aug. 1879] $133.17; [1 Sept. 1879] $68.16; [7 Aug. 1880] $192.71	403 95	
NEW YORK, [27 April, 1880] Centre Ch., Brooklyn, $22.32; [4 May, 1880] Ch. of Pil., $18.66; Clint. Ave., $13.44	54 42	
OHIO, [17 May, 1878] $110.10; [9 Sept. 1878] $100; [15 May, 1879] $34.31; [11 Sept. 1879] $77.13; [19 June, 1880] $123.86	445 40	
OREGON, [5 Sept. 1878] $8.57; [9 Aug. 1880] $6.00	14 57	
PENNSYLVANIA, [19 June, 1880]	13 98	

Rhode Island, [15 June, 1878] $46.21; [26 March, 1880] $50.73	$96 94	
Tennessee, [16 March, 1880]	8 80	
Texas, [31 July, 1879] $1.70; [1 Oct. 1879] $2.85; [12 March, 1880] $1.00	5 55	
Utah, [28 Oct. 1880]	1 01	
Vermont, [12 April, 1880]	151 61	
Washington Territory, [15 May, 1880]	66	
West Virginia, [19 June, 1880]	1 36	
Wisconsin, [7 Jan. 1879]	62 12	
Wyoming, [26 Oct. 1880]	82	
		$6,055 00
Rec'd from advertising in *Year Book*, [1879] $702.49; [1880] $863.34		1,565 83
Rec'd for *Year Books* sold, [1879] $98.65; [1880] $58.75; paper stock sold, $16.50		173 90
Total receipts from all sources since last Council		$7,834 33

TREASURER HAS EXPENDED:

1877.				
20 Oct.	Paid expenses of Treasurer [C. Demond] to Detroit			$54 81
	Paid salary of Treasurer [C. Demond] for 1878			50 00
	Telegrams [to Mr. Fairbanks, 41c.; Dr. Quint, 25c.]			66
	Advertising [*Congregationalist*]			118 70
	Postage, aside from postage on *Year Books*			12 85
	Stationery			1 66
	Paid for printing blanks for statistics, furnished several States, circulars, etc.			79 44
	Paid personal expenses of committees, etc., viz.: —			
	W. H. Moore	$55 35		
	S. Wolcott	45 00		
	A. H. Quint [1878] [and money paid out]	89 90		
	A. H. Quint [1879] " "	62 50		
			252 75	
	Paid cost of *Minutes* of 1878, [4,300 copies] including cost of editing, sending out, etc. [average 71c. each]			3,073 45
	Paid cost of *Year Book* of 1879, [8,000 copies, distributed, postpaid, to ministers and churches] including cost of editing, sending out, etc. [average 46c. each delivered]			3,718 36
	Paid cost of *Year Book* of 1880, [8,000 copies, distributed, postpaid, etc.] including cost of editing, sending out, etc. [average 30c. each delivered]			2,427 46
	Paid interest and expense consequent on non-payment of bills when due			186 46
				$9,976 60
				7,834 33
1880.				
4 Nov.	Balance due the Treasury, — not including any account of the present Treasurer's service, or of interest on moneys advanced by him: ordinary bills due and unpaid			$2,142 27

Boston, Nov. 5, 1880.

The undersigned has examined the above written account, and finds it correctly cast and the payments properly vouched, and that the balance due the treasurer is twenty-one hundred and forty-two dollars and $\frac{27}{100}$, as stated.

Langdon I. Ward, *Auditor.*

The following is a list of States which have, in whole or in part, failed to respond to the request of the last Council for contribution to its funds for its necessary expenses, viz. : —

California, [still due]	$44 27
District of Columbia, [paid nothing] due	11 82
Florida, [paid nothing] due	1 15
Georgia, [still due]	1 65
Illinois, [still due]	8 71
Indian Territory, [paid nothing] due	23
Kansas, [paid nothing] due	106 42
Kentucky, [paid nothing] due	10 23
Louisiana, [paid nothing] due	18 63
Maine, [still due]	167 47
Maryland, [paid nothing] due	3 10
Michigan, [still due] [$33.00 paid further]	63 01
Nevada, [paid nothing] due	57
New Jersey, [paid nothing] due	66 23
New York, [paid nothing as a State] deducting payments of three churches, still due	600 11
North Carolina, [paid nothing] due	5 33
Pennsylvania, [still due]	99 30
South Carolina, [paid nothing] due	4 95
Vermont, [still due]	247 18
Virginia, [paid nothing] due	4 10
Washington Territory, [still due]	3 40
Wisconsin, [still due]	205 97
	$1,673 83

Had these churches seen fit to pay the money asked by the Council, and voted by their representatives, the balance due the treasury would have been reduced to $468.44. H. M. D.

REPORT UPON THE PARISH SYSTEM.

To the National Congregational Council of 1880:

Your committee have been very much interested in examining the paper submitted to them. It gives a history of the parish system, when the town or some other locality, with prescribed and definite boundaries, with all its inhabitants, constituted the parish, which inhabitants were all taxed, and constrained if need be to pay those taxes, for the support of preaching and other incidental charges, whether they agreed with the preacher in religious sentiments or not.

It also gives an account of the experiences of our brethren in Massachusetts, under their early State Constitution and laws, and the legal decisions under them in 1820 and 1830, by which the parish was made supreme and the church was wholly ignored. The third article of the Constitution of Massachusetts, as originally adopted, and as it continued down to 1833, authorized and required the several towns, parishes, and precincts to make provision at their own expense for the public worship of God and the maintenance of religious teachers, and also gave the towns and parishes the *exclusive* right of electing and contracting with their religious teachers.

The towns or parishes in 1820 had become quite a different affair from what they had been at first. None but church-members had a right to vote in town affairs for a long time. If this state of things had continued there, the towns, in selecting their pastors and teachers, would have been under the lead and control of the church. But things had not continued as they had been. The great increase of population, both by immigration and otherwise, was of a different character from the original stock. The church had not kept pace with the rapid increase of population, and a spirit of worldliness and innovation and change was pervading the new communities.

In 1820 in the Dedham case, and in 1830 in the Brookfield case, the courts decided under this article of the Constitution, and in the changed state of society, that the parish was all and the church substantially nothing.

New Hampshire, which adopted a Constitution in 1783, with an article similar to that of Massachusetts, had got sick of the parish system in 1819, and repealed the law authorizing towns to raise money to support preachers or build meeting-houses, or have

anything to do with the maintaining of religious services; but provided for the formation of religious societies for those purposes, founded entirely upon the *voluntary* principle, which law has remained with little change until the present time.

In Massachusetts they did not get rid of this objectionable article in the Constitution until 1833, when it was repealed, and the system of voluntary societies for the maintenance of public religious worship was adopted. These societies have been just such as the churches, and the people of each denomination who relied on them for aid, have chosen to make them. Our Congregational churches have generally, almost invariably, sought the aid of such a society, and the societies have been as a rule just what the churches chose to make them; and they might in all cases just as well have been of the right kind had they been got up with proper care and foresight. In some cases all that was required in order to join the society was to subscribe to the constitution. But the constitution bound them to no church, to no form of doctrine, but only to contribute their proportion for the purpose of maintaining public religious worship, or the public worship of God, or some such general terms, without making it denominational, or necessarily even Christian.

The wonder is that there have not been more cases of defection on the part of such societies than there have been. In our present system, which is not properly speaking the parish system, but that of the voluntary society, which has superseded the parish properly so called, we have but few of the distinctive features of the old parish system. Now no member is required or expected to join the society unless of his voluntary act; and when he has joined, if he becomes dissatisfied, he can withdraw at pleasure. There is nothing like compulsion about the society system.

The former committee have found, after a full inquiry and investigation, that our present society system is free from another objection that is sometimes urged against it; viz., that the society is secular in its spirit and alien from the true interests of the church, that the church and society are naturally antagonistic forces. They say on page 242 of the minutes of the last Council: "The parish was not instituted as matter of worldly compromise. The church did not seek in it any unworthy affiliation; its aim was honorable and not sordid. Because secular men may belong to it, it has been represented as thoroughly secular in spirit, an organization wholly alien from the church, the two representing antagonistic forces.

That is not a representation of its normal state. The constituency of the two bodies is largely the same, and almost as a universal rule the members of the church are preponderant, both in the society and on its board of trust; and if in a state of Christian society differing widely from any which existed in the days of the apostles, we can make the religious society or parish auxiliary to the church without weakening the moral tone of the church, without compromising her spiritual character, without hazarding her principles and her independence, we may do so with entire freedom. Such action will harmonize perfectly with the spirit of the dispensation under which we live: and whether we retain the parish or whether we discard it, we are to remember that in its unperverted form it is a Christian, not a Pagan institution, — a religious, not an irreligious organization; that while not invested with the sacredness of the church covenant, it is so intimately associated with the church as to claim in its proper sphere the same respect which the body claims from the soul."

And while a part of the former committee regarded the parish or society "as an institution intrinsically undesirable" in itself, if Congregational churches were now to be launched *de novo*, yet for reasons there stated they concur in recommendations which contemplate the continuance or perpetuation of the system, and which at the same time seek to obviate or allay its evils (which was just what all the committee were striving to do); yet to the other part of the committee it seemed clear that the evil ingredients were not inherent in the system, or ineradicable, and that the society may, with due care and vigilance, be guarded against ordinary dangers, and be, as in numberless cases it has been, a valuable auxiliary to the church in the work and warfare to which she is appointed; that while the church may need some additional safeguards in the use of the system, there was no occasion to abolish it; that the system should be relegated to its own sphere, and in that sphere it may be an arm of strength to the church.

The committee then proceed to consider the subject of the organization of the legal corporation; and after discussing the reasons pro and con, they came, as we understand the report, to the unanimous conclusion that even though the members of the society should be limited to the members of the church, yet it would be far preferable that the members of the church should be organized into a separate society to attend to the business of the society. They are very definite and explicit on that point. They say in closing this particular point of discussion, as follows: —

"Provision for religious societies being now made in all the States, we deem it advisable that a society be organized in every church, and under general laws become incorporate, not as a church, but as a society Should the membership of the society remain identical with that of the church, we still regard this as the better course."

The next question they discuss is as to whether the membership of the society should be confined to members of the church, and on this point they say: "In her covenant relations the church *must* be exclusive; she cannot share its fellowship with those that are outside of it. But in the support of public worship, the benefits of which are shared by others, she may also share with them its pecuniary burdens, provided it be done in a way which does not compromise her self-government as a church. If there are none in the congregation whose aid is desired by the church in this relation, the membership will be confined to her own ranks. If, on the other hand, it is thought expedient to enlist the services of others in this relation," then they propose a plan designed to make them available without incurring the evils which had sometimes followed from such association. "Our object," they say, "is to give to the members of the church the virtual control of the society, while providing for the free and responsible activity of those members of the congregation who, it is supposed, can render desirable service in the common cause."

They therefore present a plan for a constitution of a religious society, which was designed to prevent the evils which had sometimes grown out of the society system in consequence of too much laxity or carelessness in the construction of the society.

Art. I. of their plan is devoted to the name and objects of the society. Sect. 2 of said article states the object of the society to be to co-operate with a certain church, by name, in providing for and maintaining the public worship of God, in accordance with the faith and order of said church.

Art. II. relates to membership, and provides that the resident members of the church shall be members of the society. Any other stated attendants upon the public worship of the church and regular contributors to its support may become members of the society by vote of the majority of the members present and voting at the annual meeting. Membership in the society shall terminate by removal beyond its bounds.

Art. III. is devoted to officers and their duties; Art. IV. to

meetings; Art. V. to removals; Art. VI. provides for the present members of the society; and Art. VII. is devoted to amendments. Then follows a compact between the church and society, to be adopted by both, by which it is stipulated what part each shall take in the conduct of public worship, in calling or dismissing a minister, the supply of the pulpit, the music, the control of the sanctuary; also providing for the alteration of the compact, when both parties shall separately vote to do so.

The committee conclude their report as follows: "With fallible minds and imperfect hearts no system of church administration will be free from unhappy lapses; as in other matters, we must adopt the best practicable method, while constantly reaching towards a higher ideal. We would not have our churches break with anything which is valuable in their precious inheritance; we desire them to retain practical control over all the interests which the Master has intrusted to their keeping: and at the same time we wish them to draw to their assistance in outward services, and ultimately into their glad fellowship in sacred relations, their respected associates in the public worship of the sanctuary, many of whom are now not far from the kingdom of God."

The report of the special committee of the last Council, appointed to consider the same paper which was referred to us, seems to be pretty conclusive as to the judgment of that Council in this matter. They say: "The report shows in the first place how far back in our history we may trace the germs of our present parish system. It shows, also, how completely the ancient system of New England has been modified in adapting it to the voluntary principle in sustaining public worship. It states fairly and clearly the necessity of a system of checks and balances, which will prevent the parish from encroaching upon the spiritual functions of the church. It sets forth, also, the great advantages which come to an organized and working Christianity from the generous gifts of those who are not yet members with us, but who love our nation and build our synagogues. It suggests also the advantages in the *spiritual* work of the church, of inviting the co-operation of those who are not yet members with us. It shows that many of the difficulties between churches and parishes arise from a neglect to define carefully the relative rights and duties of the two bodies."

They therefore recommended the following resolution, which, with the foregoing, was adopted:—

"*Resolved*, That while recognizing the advantages which our churches and congregations have derived from the so-called parish system as it has existed among us, we feel bound most earnestly to advise the churches to guard against any tendency which may exist to subordinate the interests of truth and religion to the parish. The church should exercise its undoubted right to take the lead in the selection of a pastor, and also to direct its public and social religious services."

They also passed other resolutions relating to councils for the calling and dismissing of pastors, in which we fully concur, but which do not bear directly upon the subject before us.

After being notified of the appointment of the present committee, I wrote to each member of it, calling his attention to the paper submitted to us, and asking his opinion of it. I received answers from all the committee, a large majority of which were very decidedly in favor of the society system. Take as a sample an extract from a letter from the member from Kansas, — a State having more Congregational churches and more Congregationalists than any other State beyond the Missouri River; more common schools, also; and certainly not less of civil and religious freedom than any other, it having been a quarter of a century ago the great battle-ground of freedom for this nation, — a battle-ground on which, thanks to God and the old free-soilers of Kansas, the right prevailed.

Judge Brewer in his letter says: —

"I approve of the report of the former committee, though I do not agree with that part of the committee who thought the system 'intrinsically undesirable.' I see no inherent evil in it, believe it wise in origin and wisely perpetuated. I hope to see it continue a part of Congregational polity."

With views similar to these, expressed by a majority of the committee, we set ourselves to work with a view to so guard, define, and limit the powers of the society, that we might still continue to enjoy the advantages of the system, without any liability on the part of the church of being improperly governed, overruled, or influenced by the society.

The committee are not entirely unanimous in their conclusions. The majority believed it unnecessary and perhaps unprofitable to take up further time or space in discussing the merits of the question, or in assigning further reasons either for or against the society system. Those reasons upon the one side and the other were fully

given in the former report and appendix, as stated by the several advocates of the opposite views, and the merits of the whole were very fully discussed, occupying in all nearly a hundred closely printed large-sized pages in the minutes of the former Council. In accordance with these views and with the aid of my brethren, I had prepared a brief report, stating our conclusions without going into any reargument of the case, when I found that two members of the committee did not agree with the majority. I offered to state their views briefly in connection with the views of the majority, and there leave the matter. This proposition was not accepted, both gentlemen preferring to make a minority report. To this there was of course no objection on the part of the majority; but it seemed to render it proper, and perhaps necessary, that I should make a rather more extended introduction to the report than would otherwise have been necessary.

The majority had prepared and signed their report prior to Sept. 1, 1880, and before the lamented death of Judge Foster, of Connecticut, a valued member of the committee, who died at his home in Norwich, Sept. 18, 1880. He was very decided in his approval of the society system when properly regulated, and rendered to the committee valuable aid in this matter. The *Congregationalist* of Sept. 22, in speaking of him, says: "He was born in Franklin, Conn., Nov. 23, 1806, and was consequently nearly seventy-four years of age. He is said to have been a direct descendant of Miles Standish. He graduated at Brown University in 1828, taking the first appointment. In 1831 he commenced the practice of the law in Norwich, soon came to represent the town in the Legislature, and was elected mayor of Norwich in 1851, and re-elected the next year without a solitary vote being thrown against him. In 1857 he was sent to the United States Senate from Connecticut, holding the office during two terms, and as president of the Senate for two years of his second term; after President Lincoln's assassination he was acting Vice-President of the United States. In 1851 his Alma Mater conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Laws, and in 1868 Yale made him a professor in her Law School. In 1870 he was elected to the Supreme Bench of Connecticut, holding the office until disqualified by age. He was one of the leading founders of the Park Congregational Church in Norwich, and as a delegate to the National Council presided over the sessions of that body at New Haven in 1874. His last public appearance was when, on the 6th inst., he delivered the address at the ninety-ninth anniversary of the battle of Groton Heights."

In the last letter he ever wrote to me, under date of July 27, 1880, he said: "I have signed the report, and herewith return it. It seems to me proper and judicious."

With such an indorsement by such a man I submit the paper under date of Sept. 1, as it had been before that date signed by the several members of the committee.

J. E. SARGENT,
For the committee.

REPORT.

Your committee, having attended to the duty assigned them by the foregoing appointment, now respectfully submit their report. We have examined the paper submitted to us with care and deliberation. Its preparation required great labor and research, guided by distinguished ability and practical wisdom. It is a valuable and exhaustive essay upon the subject discussed, which subject is of great importance to the temporal prosperity and success of the churches of our denomination.

We have also attended carefully to the report of the committee appointed by the last Council to consider the same subject which is now before us, which report was adopted by the last Council, as found on pages 48 and 49 of their minutes. That report and that action upon it indicated the sense of that Council, and probably of the denomination at large, upon that subject.

We have also considered the provisions of the draft, or plan, of a constitution of a religious society, recommended by the former committee, as found in the minutes of the Council of 1877, page 247, and sequel. In its main features it goes far in the right direction, though perhaps in some respects that might be improved.

The *objects* of the society should in every case be clearly stated, defined, and limited (as in Art. I., Sect. 2, of said plan), as being "to aid and co-operate with" a particular church by name, "in providing for and maintaining the public worship of God in accordance with the faith and order of said church."

With such a provision inserted in its constitution, the society might easily be enjoined, if necessary, not to raise or appropriate money, or take other action for any other purpose or in any other way than as thus limited.

The *membership* of the society should also be properly limited. In a few States this is now regulated by statute. Where that is the case, of course the provisions of the law must govern, and if

such provisions are not right they should be modified; but in all other cases the matter should be properly regulated by the constitution of the society. The limitation stated in Art. II. in said plan might accomplish this; or the terms of admission might perhaps properly be varied so as to admit "all male persons of full age, who are resident members of the church, upon their signing the constitution of the society," with a similar provision to that in the plan for the admission of others not members of the church. And the compact between the church and society is also an important matter. By some such plan and compact all the spiritual interests and arrangements of the church, including the conduct of public worship and religious meetings, and the Sabbath school with its superintendence, should be placed under the control of the church, while all the financial and other secular interests and arrangements of the congregation should be assigned to the management of the society. In this way the church would be able to unite with her own the efforts of such others outside the church as are able and disposed to render valuable aid and assistance.

Guided by the action of the former Council and by the views above stated, and using such other aids as have been accessible to us, we would submit as the result of our deliberations the following resolutions, and recommend their adoption by the Council:—

Resolved. 1st. That while the society system, as heretofore exemplified in its practical workings, may have disclosed defects, yet we believe they are not inherent in the system, but that they may be remedied or prevented.

Resolved. 2d. That societies thus organized to aid the church in secular affairs, but not controlling her spiritual interests or arrangements, may be important and valuable aids in building up the Redeemer's Kingdom in the world.

J. E. SARGENT,
L. F. S. FOSTER,
J. O. FISKE,
E. J. GILLETTE,
D. J. BREWER,
Committee.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1880.

The undersigned, members of the committee on the Parish System, finding themselves unable to adopt the views presented by the majority, respectfully present this

REPORT OF THE MINORITY.

We regard the subject discussed in the paper submitted to our review as not only of great importance in its relation to the temporal prosperity and secular usefulness of the churches, but of even more importance in its relation to their spiritual welfare and religious usefulness. We also do fully agree with the other members of the committee in their estimate of the remarkably thorough and able report presented to the National Council at its last session.

In our study of that report, these facts impress us: —

1. Existing ecclesiastical societies exhibit a great diversity in respect to the basis of membership and the range of responsibility and authority. This diversity is so great that the societies exhibiting it can hardly be regarded as representing *a parish system*. The denomination as a body cannot be said, in strict speech, to have a system to which the society conforms. It appears, also, that no one of existing societies represents the original method of ecclesiastical organization in New England. The societies of the present day exhibit the diverse results of a series of experiments intended to remedy the discovered faults of previous experiments. This fact suggests a doubt whether our ecclesiastical habits respecting the interests involved in the parish question are yet settled upon right and stable principle. It may also explain in part why the question, coming now for the third time before this Council, is not whether the form or function of the society should be modified, but whether the body itself should be continued in existence.

2. The report before us further demonstrates, as is stated in its own words (Minutes of 1877, p. 232), "that the system, if it is not to be exterminated, is attended with dangers and drawbacks, which needed to be guarded against." This conclusion is established by reference to many instances in which the system has wrought immeasurable harm. There is, on the other hand, no instance cited, in which the church has encroached on the prerogatives of the congregation to the detriment of the common interest. Nor is any evidence offered that the numerous churches of our own and of other denominations which dispense with the society have suffered harm thereby. The report recognizes the value of the aid that may come to the church from the subordinate agency of the society. It does not, on the other hand, exhibit any advantage as accruing to the church from the *co-ordinate authority* of the society. These facts suggest a doubt whether, under the most favorable view of the

system represented by the society, the benefit which it may bring to the church can balance the "dangers and drawbacks," against which constant guard must be maintained.

3. The report places great emphasis on the spiritual nature and function of the church, on its duty of independence, and especially on its obligation to reserve to itself "a controlling voice in the management of all church affairs." (Minutes of 1877, p. 244.) Here seems to be indicated the point of view from which the parish question should be examined.

I. From the principle here laid down, and as we believe, generally admitted, it seems to follow immediately that the church cannot consistently intrust the control of any of its interests to a body whose members in greater or less number are not even by profession personally committed to the spiritual ends that the church seeks, and which is not itself subject in all things to the will of the church. The alliance between church and society, as generally established, seems to involve on the part of the church the compromise of a vital principle.

If there be a society whose membership is limited to those who are members of the church, or if there be one whose acts are subject to revision and possible reversal by the church, neither of these societies would, in our view, represent the parish system. To such societies the main objections suggested in this report would not apply. There are those, however, who will raise the question, whether the methods of ecclesiastical administration illustrated by such societies are not needlessly cumbersome.

II. The argument against the society seems to us greatly confirmed by certain concessions which are conspicuously made by the advocates of the society.

1. It is conceded that the spiritual interests of the church should remain wholly within its own control, and that only the secular interests, as distinct from the spiritual, should be intrusted to the society. But we believe that the distinction between spiritual and secular, as defining the separate functions of church and society, is practically not valid.

The church has no secular interests that are separate or separable from its spiritual interests. It has no secular interests except such as are subordinate and tributary to the spiritual. The ecclesiastical functions assigned to the society relate more or less directly, but by inevitable necessity, to the spiritual interests of the church. The construction and care of the house of worship, the charge of

the property held for the uses of the church, the appointment and direction of the sexton, the contract with organist, chorister, and choir, the pledge of salary to the minister and the fidelity with which it is discharged, affect seriously the spiritual interests of the church; and if, as usual, the society shares with the church authority in the choice of a pastor, then the society no less than the church exercises authority touching the chief spiritual interests of the church.

But the control of the society over what are called secular affairs gives it an authority that is more than co-ordinate with that of the church. Like the lower house of Congress, it is virtually the supreme power. It has power to prohibit the installation of the pastor whom the church may have chosen. By withholding supplies, it has power to compel the retirement of the pastor whom the church desires to retain. It is wholly independent of ecclesiastical control except through the intervention of the civil law, — a last and costly resort. The society, as generally organized, can compel the church to discard the pastorate, to neglect the duties and to forego the benefits of fellowship with other churches in the settlement of the minister, and to content itself for an indefinite period with the services of the "hired man." It can degrade the church to the condition of a pensioner, and the minister to the condition of a hireling. With this power in the hands of the society, the mere privilege, conceded to the church, of nomination to the pastorate becomes but an ecclesiastical courtesy, availing only to protect the church against the installation of an unwelcome pastor.

2. It is further conceded by advocates of the society that membership in that body should be limited to such persons as are friendly to the church. This concession, sometimes explicit, is more frequently implied in the terms used to define the function of the society. The function of the society is defined, not as opposing, restraining, or governing the church, but as *aiding* it. Membership in the society is by implication limited to those who will render to the church the aid of friends.

But it cannot safely be assumed that men who refrain from church membership are friendly to the church in the Scriptural sense, which implies conversion. Unregenerate men in the church, and regenerate men out of it, represent exceptions to any sound theory of church organization; nor can a church consistently regard such men as sustaining any other than an exceptional relation to the church.

A system of ecclesiastical administration founded on exceptions to its fundamental principle is self-destructive. A system that assumes the Christian character of men who refuse to make Christian profession, is logically inconsistent. It tends to impair the significance of Christian profession, and to undermine the foundation of the church.

If on the other hand, it be assumed that the members of the society who are not Christians by profession are also not Christians in fact, then still more is the concession of a measure of ecclesiastical authority to men who are not Christians, inconsistent with the character, the aims, and the dearest interests of the church.

3. The use of the word "aid," together with the avoidance of terms signifying opposition or control, involves the concession that the society should be subject to the church.

If the society pleads for existence on the ground that it is a valuable aid to the church, then we think it must be held to its own plea; it must not be suffered to usurp control, nor to resist control. The church must, by the very terms of its treaty with the society, reserve to itself the right to judge what action of the society is in its aid, and to confirm or annul that action at its discretion.

The chief plea on behalf of the society, that it is an aid to the church, logically concedes to the church the right to overrule the acts of the society,—a concession that virtually abolishes the society.

III. The argument against the society, originating in the spiritual nature and calling of the church, and confirmed by the concessions made in defining the membership and the function of the society, seems to us yet further strengthened by a view of certain practical features of the system represented by the society.

The evils hypothetically recognized in the first resolution offered by the majority of the present committee seem to us to be real, numerous, great, and so far inherent in the society system that no safeguard against them can be devised. Some of these evils are enumerated in the very thorough report presented to the Council at its last session. (Minutes for 1877, page 243.)

Among the features of the society system which seem to us practically harmful, a few are here indicated: —

1. It releases the church as a body from pecuniary responsibility in the making and fulfilling of contracts in prosecution of its work.

2. It deprives the church of the control of funds contributed by its own members for its uses.

3. It intrusts all those interests of the church which are involved immediately or remotely in the administration of its pecuniary affairs, to a distinct and independent body, to a body free from ecclesiastical control, to a body in the determination of whose membership the church has no voice, to a body whose membership cannot be protected against the intrusion of men destitute of vital sympathy with godliness, and to a body organized for the avowed purpose of giving a measure of authority over the church to men not qualified even for membership in the church.

4. It gives dangerous prominence to men of wealth, and tends to subordinate spiritual interests to secular interests.

5. It gives to the society practical supremacy over the church; a supremacy disguised by concession to the church of authority in spiritual affairs, but effectually maintained in the control of the financial affairs of the church, and in the power to veto any call of the church to the pastorate.

6. It enfeebles the moral power of the church by forcing it to a condition of dependence.

7. It compromises the evangelical doctrine of conversion by the implication that the members of the society and the members of the church are of kindred spirit and purpose.

8. It removes one of the chief ecclesiastical safeguards of personal and doctrinal purity in the ministry. That safeguard we find in the installing council. As already shown, the society has power to prevent installation by council. In numerous instances the society has embodied the extreme spirit of ecclesiastical independency. It has removed the pulpit from under the eye of the ecclesiastical council. It has fostered in the ministry itself an unwillingness to submit to examination by council.

IV. The society system fails, we believe, to exhibit advantages counterbalancing its manifest evils. Whatever real aid it seems to bring to the church can be secured effectually, we believe, without the harmful system.

The chief arguments in favor of the society seem reducible to two: 1. The congregation has a common interest with the church in its work, and should therefore share the control of that work. 2. The church can procure the help of men from without by conceding to them some share of authority.

To the first argument it may be answered, that it proves, if anything, too much for its purpose. No society secures for the entire congregation a share in the administration of ecclesiastical

affairs. But it is not true that the congregation and the church have a "common interest" in any such sense as the phrase implies. The congregation does not share with the church its spiritual profession and acknowledged responsibility. It is the calling of the church to give religious teaching. It is the privilege of the congregation to receive such teaching as the church may give. The duty of the church requires it to distinguish between what the congregation *desires* and what it *needs*. Sometimes the church is bound by most sacred obligations to withhold what the congregation eagerly desires. Such interest as the congregation sometimes manifests in the work of the church contains the proof that the church can yield authority to the congregation only at forfeiture of its own life.

The church has never been in danger of paying too little regard to the tastes and preferences of those who are without. It has no need to place itself under bonds lest it withhold the respect due from it to the world. All legitimate regard for the wishes of the congregation the church is sure to pay without constituting itself the ward of the society. More than is consistent or safe it is likely to pay under the society system.

The second argument for the society needs only a little expansion to exhibit its refutation within itself. A church that worthily discharges its trust will win the respect of those in the congregation who recognize the good done by the church to themselves, to their families, and to the community; and such men will contribute to the aid of the church (as do now many members of the congregation who are members neither of church nor of society), without conditioning their contributions upon their share in the management of an organization of which they are not members.

But the argument does not refer to such men. It applies only to men who deny their indebtedness to the church for the philanthropic agencies that issue from it, and who refuse their aid to it except on condition of their admission to a share in the *authority* of membership without a share in the *responsibility* of membership.

It is doubtless true, as the argument implies, that the society system does provide a method by which the church, at expense of its prerogative of self-government and in partial repudiation of its sacred trust, may gain money from men who will relieve its need on no easier terms. *Such help* is hindrance. We think that this argument for the society, when its implications respecting the spirit of the society are clearly seen, will be repudiated by the members of the society themselves.

From whatever point of view we look at the society question, whether we consider the principles involved or the practical working of the system in question, whether we examine the pleas or the concessions put forth in the name of the society, we come to the conclusion that the system is radically wrong and harmful, and we believe that the church of Christ should no longer maintain for itself the distinction of being the only institution among men which confesses incompetency for the doing of its own work and for the control of its own affairs.

We recognize the necessity of respecting to the utmost the legal and moral rights of existing ecclesiastical societies. We also recognize the necessity of conforming to the provisions of the civil law respecting the tenure and administration of the property of the church; and the propriety of securing, where necessary, such modification of existing laws as shall bring the statute into consistency with the natural right of the church to manage all its own affairs. We also admit that in rare circumstances the ideal method of ecclesiastical administration may be practically impossible.

Yet we believe that our churches should have a definite policy guided by sound principle.

Such principle seems to us plainly and emphatically to require the abandonment of the present society system. We therefore offer the following

Resolution.

Resolved, That this National Council, in response to an overture of inquiry whether "the best interests of Congregationalism do not require the disuse of the society system," places on record its conviction: —

1. That fidelity to the divine law, establishing the church and prescribing its work, and consistency with the solemnly avowed aim of the church, and the dictates of practical wisdom, alike require that the Christian church, of whatever denomination, retain in its own hands the entire responsibility and control of its own affairs.

2. That compliance on the part of the church with this requirement is impossible under the present society system.

GEORGE B. SAFFORD,
EDWARD H. MERRELL, } *Of the committee.*

REPORT UPON MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND STANDING.

The committee appointed by the National Council, in 1877, "to inquire into the facts and the various usages of our denomination respecting ministerial responsibility and standing, and report to the next triennial Council, with such recommendations as they may deem advisable," submit the following report: —

In order to obtain the desired information, a series of questions was sent to the scribe or registrar of each local association, conference, and convention. The replies have shown the constitution of such bodies in all parts of the country, the relation and responsibility to them of the Congregational ministry within their borders, the methods by which standing in this ministry is now acquired or forfeited, and the result in either case certified. We have also received the minutes of the State bodies, and the printed constitutions and by-laws of numerous local organizations. For this co-operation your committee desire to express their great obligation.

The subjects of our inquiry have for some time engaged the attention of State and district associations, especially during the past three years; and as the result, important regulations have been adopted. In the Western States, particularly, a general movement has been in progress designed to meet the new conditions of our polity, and to adapt it more fully to the service for which it exists. If we may judge from the tenor of our correspondence and from influential expressions of opinion in various parts of the land, there is a prevalent desire among Congregationalists that the usages of our denomination respecting the acquisition, maintenance, and forfeiture of ministerial standing may become more accordant with the fundamental principles of our polity, and more simple, definite, and practical.

The usages which now exist may be stated, with sufficient completeness for our present purpose, in answering two questions, —

First. How is standing in the Congregational ministry acquired?

Second. How, under the Congregational polity, is ministerial responsibility maintained?

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS.

The platform of ecclesiastical polity published by a large and influential committee appointed by the National Council of 1865,

and commonly known as "the Boston Platform," defines the Christian ministry as inclusive "of all who are called of God to preach the gospel, and are set apart to that work by ordination."

To this catholic definition of the ministry the usages of our denomination are now universally conformed. It is recognized in the minutes of all our State bodies, and in the list of Congregational ministers published in the *Year Book*. In a few localities a yet broader interpretation appears to be admitted, licentiates of local associations of ministers, or of district conventions of churches and ministers, being included. But this practice, at most, is quite exceptional. In general, the term "Congregational ministry" covers all ordained preachers of the word who have been received as such into the communion of churches of the Congregational order.

This ministry is divided in our *Annual Statistics* into two classes; viz., those "in pastoral work" and those "not in pastoral work." The former class is subdivided into *Pastors*, or those who have been recognized as such by an ecclesiastical council or association, and *Acting Pastors*, or those who have not been thus recognized.

In 1648, the year in which the Cambridge Synod completed its platform, there were fifty Congregational churches on this continent.[1] In 1865, when a committee presented to a National Council a draught of what is now known as the Boston Platform, there were 2,723. At the former date the churches were all planted in a few Eastern colonies, — nearly four fifths of the whole number in what is now the State of Massachusetts. To-day they are established in forty-two States and Territories.[2] A comparison of the two platforms affords a striking illustration of the influence of such extension and consequent experience upon the growth of usage and rules. The Cambridge Platform has two chapters on the communion of churches; the Boston has five. The latter has one chapter on conferences and another on ministerial associations; the former knows nothing of either association or conference. The Boston Platform has four chapters on the ministry as distinct from the pastorate; the Cambridge Platform recognizes no ministry of the word by ordained men, save that committed to officers of local churches.

Since the Council of 1865 the roll of Congregational churches has been increased by more than one third of the number then regis-

[1] See Rev. Dr. Dexter's tables in *Congregational Quarterly*, Vol. IV. p. 269.
[2] This includes the District of Columbia.

tered, and the number of ministers by a proportion nearly as large. Numerous local organizations have been formed, within the same period, with constitutions and functions different from any recognized in either platform. And — most noticeable of all changes — a movement already in progress when the Boston Platform was framed, though unrecognized by it, has gone steadily forward, and has already influenced very widely the customs and rules of Congregational organizations.

A few statistics will make this change distinct and impressive, and we ask for them special attention.

In 1857, the proportion of pastors settled over churches by advice of an ecclesiastical council to those not thus recognized was as 55 to about 32, a small percentage being unclassified. Ten years later the ratio was as 44 to 54, the statistics being still not quite complete. Then, descending by triennial intervals, the proportions are 42 to 58, 39 to 61, 38 to 62, 36 to 64; so that in little more than twenty years the percentage of pastors has *decreased* from 55 to 36, and that of acting pastors has *increased* from 32 to 64.

This change has been accompanied by another; viz., an increase in the proportion of ministers not engaged in pastoral work, either as pastors or acting pastors. In 1857, twenty-five per cent of Congregational ministers in the United States were not employed in pastoral service; in 1879, thirty-two per cent were not thus engaged. In 1857, forty-one per cent of our clergy were pastors; in 1879, twenty-four per cent. In 1857, about forty-nine per cent did not come under the older usages and rules which had been devised to secure the special responsibility of pastors; in 1879, this number had risen to seventy-six per cent, and is now probably still higher.

Nor is this change confined to any special locality, nor due to the rapid extension of our polity in new settlements. It may proceed more rapidly in the newer than in the older communities, but it appears everywhere. At the beginning, for instance, of the period reviewed, more than four fifths of the Congregational ministers of Massachusetts engaged in pastoral service were installed. Now less than one half are thus settled. The proportion, also, of ministers not employed in pastoral work has increased from about twenty-seven per cent to about thirty-two.

The usages of our denomination, as respects ministerial standing, require consideration with special reference to these two salient

facts: (1) The wide territorial extension and large numerical increase of our churches, admitting great mobility of the ministry; and (2) the gradual withdrawal of this ministry from its original pastoral basis, until now less than one quarter of the whole number are *pastors* of churches in the meaning of this term as used in the historic platforms and generally accepted manuals.

Keeping these considerations in mind, let us now proceed to examine the prevalent usages as respects the acquisition of ministerial standing and the maintenance of ministerial responsibility.

I. *The acquisition of standing in the Congregational ministry.*

From some of the returns received we infer that, in a few localities, licensure, either by a ministerial association or by a body composed of pastors and delegates of churches, is regarded as an admission to the Christian ministry. This opinion has never found expression in any of our platforms or manuals, nor by any representative Congregational council or synod. Licensure by ministerial associations is usually regarded as simply an approbation, upon examination, of persons who are thus introduced and commended to the churches as suitable persons to become pastors and teachers. Their actual introduction into the Congregational ministry, according to long-established usage, is by ordination. When licensure is granted by ecclesiastical organizations, there is a closer connection than in the other case with the churches, in which ultimately rests the ordaining power; yet even then it is given only for a limited period, and is in its nature, by general consent, a recommendation on the basis of examination, not an induction into the office of pastor, nor a full admission to the ranks of the Christian ministry.

We may assume, therefore, as consonant with the principles and general usage of churches of the Congregational order, that ordination is the door to the ministry. With this condition is coupled another; viz, reception as a minister of the gospel into the fellowship of the Congregational churches. Ordinarily, this recognition is given, at ordination, through an ecclesiastical council, which extends to the person ordained the right hand of fellowship. He is thus publicly acknowledged to be a minister of the gospel in connection with churches of the Congregational order, and so becomes, in the ordinary meaning of the words, a *Congregational* minister. He may or may not be an officer in a particular church; he may or may not preside over a special congregation of believers: but he is a person set apart to the work of the Christian ministry,

and fellowshipped as such by the churches that sustain this ministry.

Besides those thus admitted, not a few ministers have been otherwise received. Their ordination has been obtained in some other communion. Cherishing as inherent in the principles of their polity a spirit opposed to sectarianism, Congregational churches acknowledge the validity of ordination conferred by other Christian churches. A clergyman regularly set apart to the work of preaching the gospel, by the laying on of hands of some bishop or elder or presbytery of a church or churches other than their own, is not reordained on receiving a pastoral charge among them or recognition as a Congregational minister. It is enough that in some orderly way he obtain public acknowledgment by the churches as a minister within their particular communion. So far there is general agreement among us; beyond this point lie diversities of practice which we will briefly review.

In some regions it seems to be held that when a minister ordained in another communion joins a Congregational church, he thereby becomes a Congregational minister. But such a usage is at variance with established principles. The qualifications required for admission to church membership cannot be regarded as identical with those necessary for reception into the ministry. Standing in a church cannot be properly accepted as an equivalent for standing in the ministry. The latter cannot be obtained, in the case of persons educated and ordained in our own fellowship, save by the agency of an ecclesiastical council, or of some body representing in an equivalent manner the communion of Congregational churches. It cannot be properly acquired on lower terms by those educated and trained in other communions. In some form there should be, in all cases alike, a public recognition by the churches into whose ministry admission is desired. Reception into the membership of a local church is no equivalent for this public acknowledgment.

Much more general has been the custom of reception by an installing council. This method fulfils the obligations of fellowship, particularly in affording to the churches ample opportunity to become acquainted with the men who desire their recognition, and to judge of their qualifications.

But there has come to be, as we have seen, an extensive disuse of this long-established and useful custom; and as a result, other methods have been rapidly gaining in importance. In some sec-

tions associations of ministers, either by explicit or tacit consent, act in behalf of the churches. Members of such associations are recognized as in ministerial standing, and are so enrolled. Elsewhere, union with a local conference or convention or association of churches, or of churches and ministers, is regarded as essential. Some would make such membership necessary to continued recognition, even when ordination has been had through the instrumentality of an ecclesiastical council, standing in the ministry being made dependent on, if not identical with, standing in some permanent organization of Congregational churches. Sometimes — though only, we are happy to believe, in comparatively rare instances — recognition and enrolment have been obtained in ways it would be hard to explain, and yet more difficult to justify.

Taking, however, the general usage of the churches at the present time into the account, we may claim substantial agreement in this result: —

Standing in the Congregational ministry is *de facto* acquired by the fulfilment of two conditions: (1) Ordination to the Christian ministry, and (2) reception as an ordained minister into the fellowship of the Congregational churches.

II. We are now prepared to consider how ministerial *responsibility* is maintained.

The Christian ministry is not an order or class of persons distinct from the church, having an independent and transmitted right to preach, to administer sacraments, and to rule. Such conceptions had been banished by the founders of Congregationalism in this country, and they can never obtain citizenship among us. The Congregational theory of the ministry is that it is an orderly *service* of the churches, in the gospel, by men called of God to this work, and publicly set apart for it by the churches. As such persons are introduced to this service by the churches, so they are responsible to the churches. The recognition first given may for sufficient cause be withdrawn. This view of the ministry, as related to the communion of churches, has been taken from the beginning. Discipline of ministers, it is true, was at first chiefly provided for on a narrower basis, — that of office in a particular church. The minister was the pastor or teacher of some one church. Ordination inducted him into this office. Each church had the right to ordain its own officers and the right to depose them. Ministerial responsibility was thus conceived of chiefly in its relation to the local church.

Yet it was also acknowledged that a Congregational minister sus-

tains a relation to the communion of churches. This is the more noticeable because it was then generally held that the ministry is identical with the pastorate. Even in the instalment of an officer of a local church, when that officer was a preacher of the Word, it was required that the advice should be obtained of the neighboring churches. His ordination was their affair as well as that of the particular church which was to be served. And this was so strongly felt, that though the Cambridge Platform was silent on the subject, this consultation with sister churches, and obtainment of their advice, was extended to what was called the "translation" of pastors, — that is, removal to another church, — and also to deposition from office. There sprang up also the beautiful custom — witnessing, as Christian usages often do, to more catholic principles than are clearly defined — of extending to an ordained or installed pastor the right hand of fellowship; a fellowship given not only to the church in its act of making him its officer, but also to the pastor in his service of the great Head of the church as an ambassador to men. And so it has grown to be an established rule, that as an individual body of believers becomes a *Congregational* church by receiving the recognition, through a council, of the communion of Congregational churches, so an officer of an individual congregation of believers, set apart in it as a preacher of the Word, becomes a *Congregational* minister by receiving the same recognition. And it is self-evident that what a communion of churches for competent reason bestows, it can for sufficient cause withdraw. There is thus implied in our principles and usages, from the beginning, a responsibility of ministers not only to individual churches in which they are officers, but also to the communion of churches.

The Boston Platform is particularly emphatic in its insistence upon this participation of neighboring churches in the ordination, installation, dismission, or deposition of a pastor; and it extends this participation to the discipline not only of pastors, but of other ordained ministers. "The induction," it affirms, "of a pastor or teacher into his office, in any church, or, on the other hand, the dismission of such an officer from his place, concerns the communion of the churches. Therefore, an ecclesiastical council is convened for the ordination or public recognition of a pastor, and, in like manner, for his dismission at his own request. A due respect to the communion of the churches requires that no man assuming to be a pastor of a church shall be acknowledged as such by other churches, unless, at or after his entrance on the duties of the office,

he has been publicly recognized by receiving the right hand of fellowship from neighboring churches through a council convened for that purpose. The welfare of the churches, in their intimate communion with each other, requires this safeguard. In like manner, the communion of churches requires that no minister dismissed from his charge shall be regarded as having sufficient credentials of his good standing unless he is duly commended by a council convened on the occasion of his dismission." [1]

"When a pastor, or other ordained *minister*, in any church is charged with offences which would render it proper that he be deposed from the ministry, then the church should invite a council to examine the charges. If they be proven, the council should advise that he be no longer recognized as a Christian minister. The decision of the council in such a case is binding and conclusive. A second council cannot revise it, unless by consent of both parties, — the church and the accused; and courts of law will act upon it without inquiry into its correctness." [2]

Besides recognizing the responsibility of the ministry to the communion of churches, Congregationalism has also provided agencies for maintaining, in this relation, the rights of the churches.

One of these agencies — the earliest instituted — is an ecclesiastical council. We need not stop to consider the nature and functions of this familiar agency of communion. The chapter on councils in the Boston Platform is peculiarly elaborate, and so far as it goes, leaves nothing to be desired. It opens the way, also, for whatever additions are needed, and suggests very practically their principle, particularly in the phrase "other ordained minister," in the article just cited. This recognizes, as does the platform elsewhere, that there is a ministry wider than the pastorate, in which the communion of churches has interests and rights; for the particular church which is enjoined to call a council when a trial is requisite in the case of any ordained minister in its membership may have had no part in the council through which this ministerial member received ordination and obtained recognition as a Congregational minister. It stands related to him, therefore, as a Congregational minister, precisely as do other churches. His character as a Congregational minister is not derived from it, but from the communion of churches; and the propriety of its calling a council to deal with him as a minister rests on this common basis of church

[1] Chap. II. 2, pp. 51, 52.

[2] Chap. II. 7, pp. 54, 55.

communion, and not simply on his special relation to it as a member. If he were a mere member, the church would not need, in disciplining him, to call a council. Neither is he an officer in it. The supreme reason for a council, therefore, is that the church is dealing with one whom it acknowledges, through the communion of churches in which it stands, as a Congregational minister, — with one, in a word, in whose character and influence, as a preacher of the gospel, it is acknowledged that all the churches have an important interest. We have but to carry out such principles and rules of the platform to their logical and practical applications to adjust it to the new conditions of the ministry, and to evils which have become manifest since it was prepared.

Five classes of ministers are not covered by the present rules for calling councils in cases of delinquency: —

i. That of ministers who have obtained standing in the Congregational ministry without membership in any church.

ii. That of ministers who have obtained standing in the Congregational ministry without membership in a Congregational church.

iii. That of ministers who are not members of the churches they serve, but of other Congregational churches.

iv. That of ministers charged with offences which the churches of which they are members decline to call a council to examine.

v. That of ministers who are members of churches which they serve, or where they reside, but who have committed offences elsewhere that require investigation.

The first and second classes are an anomaly in Congregationalism, and should at least not be allowed to increase. The Boston Platform affirms: "A minister, who is not a member of some Congregational church, is not in fact and ought not to be counted a minister in connection with the churches and ministry of the Congregational order." The rule is founded in the principles of the Congregational polity, and ought to be observed. Yet it has so often been disregarded that there is reason to believe that not a few ministers now serving Congregational churches, or numbered with their ministry, are not subject to the discipline of any one of these churches. They should not also be exempt from that of the communion of churches, through whose recognition, explicitly or implicitly, they have obtained their standing.

The third class is very numerous, and, in consequence of the

rapid changes and wide removals of ministers, is supposed to be rather on the increase than the decline. Not a few ministers discharge the functions of their office hundreds and even thousands of miles away from the churches of which they are members. The older rules, framed largely on the theory of responsibility to the church of the locality where a permanent residence obtains, are obviously inadequate in such cases.

The fourth and fifth classes are happily much smaller than the others, yet large enough to demand attention. They are also, in the changes of our time, likely to increase rather than diminish.

The embarrassments occasioned under our present rules by these classes may be shown by a single instance, — not invented, but of actual occurrence; though as it is presented from memory, one or two minor particulars may be inaccurate. The story will be seen to apply at some point to all of the classes specified, excepting the first and second: —

A clergyman was ascertained by some members of the same association of Congregational ministers with himself to be probably guilty of gross dishonesty. They arranged to bring the matter before the association, but discovered that, under a rule common to many such bodies in the East, his membership had lapsed. Ascertaining his church connection, which was quite remote from the region where a scandal had been created, and where the witnesses necessary to establish his crime resided, they forwarded their charges, specifications, and names of witnesses, only to learn that his membership had again changed, and was now with a yet more distant church, which he was serving as acting pastor. Again the charges, specifications, and names of witnesses started on their long journey in a spirit of faithfulness, but with little prospect, as the event proved, of any hospitality at the end. The church was a weak one, and was easily persuaded by the accused minister, whom they trusted, that it was a case of persecution; and so the accusation fell to the ground. There was indeed another process that, according to our platforms, was theoretically possible. The much-travelled charges, specifications, and list of witnesses could have been sent to a third church, with a request that this church would examine them, and out of love for the purity of the ministry, though in no wise particularly responsible, would admonish the distant church that it was wilfully tolerating a scandal, though fully persuaded to the contrary. And if the church thus requested to admonish had felt called upon to undertake this painful service,

no more its duty than that of many other churches, and had sent an admonitory letter and had failed of obtaining satisfaction, it might then have taken to itself another church, and the two could have repeated in unison their admonition; or, dispensing with this, it could at once, if disposed, have called a council, — not, however, to try the chief offender in the case, but to try the church which had been misled by its confidence in its minister: and this council, if so persuaded, could have advised the church calling it, and other churches, to withdraw fellowship, not from the primarily guilty party, but from the church in which he was a member at the time the process began. If, meanwhile, following the probable average of periods of residence in his past life, he had quietly removed his connection to another church, the issue of the process would have been, at the utmost, a local advertisement of the affair, a disfellowshipping of a church with all its officers and its entire membership, and the escape of the primarily guilty party.

The brethren in the case recited naturally preferred to deposit their papers in some safe and final resting-place; and the accused minister would doubtless have been to this day a Congregational minister in good and regular, though not perhaps particularly high standing, if he had not lost the humility appropriate to his position, and turned from Congregational tribunals to civil in a suit for libel; the speedy result of which was to make him a "*settled*" minister in a non-ecclesiastical sense, and sooner, doubtless, than he anticipated, for all that was needed was the certainty of a trial to show that he had been a scamp throughout.

No polity, it is true, can exclude all pretenders and hypocrites. "It must needs be that offences come." But every polity that professes to be Christian, and ours most of all, — for we claim to have in our methods a special share of Christian directness, and of sanctified common-sense, — should provide for cases which are sure to arise, and which require to be met by known and orderly processes; processes so plain that they can be readily followed, so direct that there need be no unnecessary expenditure of time, money, and strength.

If a Congregational minister receives his credentials from the communion of churches, the communion of churches can withdraw these credentials. What is needed is a rule by which, through a council, the agency that gives fellowship, this fellowship may be retracted; a rule, in a word, which applies the principles and methods of the "Third Way of Communion" to ministers, as well as to churches.

Besides the agency of councils, Congregationalism has long employed that of ministerial and ecclesiastical associations for the purpose of maintaining ministerial responsibility.

In 1859 the Rev. Dr. Leonard Bacon, in his celebrated discourse pronounced before the General Association of Connecticut, remarked: —

"Nowhere in the United States does any intelligent man think of Congregationalism, as a method of ecclesiastical organization and communion, without including in the thought two elements which are, partly at least, the contribution of Connecticut to the completeness and stability of the system.

"Everywhere throughout the United States we find, as an inevitable incident of Congregationalism, the voluntary but formal and recognized association of pastors and other ministers. These clerical 'associations' are not for any jurisdiction or government over the churches; they abjure all pretence of corporate authority, and the churches everywhere have, long ago, ceased to regard them with suspicion. . . . It has been proved by experience that without the recognized and formal association of pastors for such purposes the churches will become, in the strife of sects and the fluctuations of opinion, a prey to the spoiler.

"The other element of our Saybrook Constitution — namely, the special consociation of churches in districts — has found less favor beyond the limits of Connecticut; but the example of our confederation has had its influence everywhere. The stated annual meeting of churches by their delegates in what are called 'conferences of churches,' for consultation on the state of religion within their own bounds, and on the ways and means of doing good, is only another form of consociation, which differs from ours by leaving to each church an unlimited liberty to select its own councils in all cases of difficulty in the administration of its own affairs. . . . Notwithstanding the well-defined propositions of the Cambridge Platform concerning 'the communion of churches one with another,' and notwithstanding the many recorded yearnings of the New England fathers for some stipulated and constant intercourse that should not impair the independence of the churches, our American Congregationalism might have lost in process of time, that great principle of communion and mutual responsibility which is no less essential to the system than the co-ordinate principle of independence; each being the complement of the other. . . . The unconsociated churches, yielding to the genius of the system while rejecting

its forms, have shared in the blessing. . . . Is there no meaning in the fact that not one of our churches, and only one of our parishes, fell in the Unitarian defection? . . . To my thought there is a meaning of the same sort in the fact that of all the religious organizations commonly regarded as anti-evangelical or anti-orthodox, not one has ever flourished among the native population of our State."

Since these words were spoken there has been a large increase of such local organizations, and also a modification of their form. Outside of New England and adjacent eastern seaboard districts, the two elements to which Dr. Bacon refers are now combined, or are rapidly combining, in one organization, composed of both ministers and churches. To this body fall all the functions of the New England Clerical Association and of the New England Church Conference. In the East, also, the State organizations have become, to some extent, a combination of the two.

Confining our attention for the moment to the purely clerical associations, they present some advantages and some disadvantages as a reliance or help in the maintenance of ministerial responsibility. Long existence in the older sections of the country has familiarized the public there with their aims and methods, and given a historic character and prestige not to be lightly esteemed. They promote professional culture, acquaintance, and fellowship; recommend to the churches candidates for the ministry; and supply the lists of ministers published in State minutes and copied in the *Year Book*. Though they have no power to depose from the ministry, their withdrawal of fellowship ordinarily has a moral influence wellnigh equivalent to the advice of a council. In some instances they have dealt with offenders not in their membership, to the extent of warning the churches against them.

On the other hand, apart from the system known as Consociationism, they have no formal or organic connection with the churches. In some localities they are regarded as simply ministerial clubs, having no right nor power to act as in any sense intrusted by the churches with responsibility for ministerial standing. Connection with them is purely optional. Their by-laws often contain rules by which membership lapses simply by removal beyond their limits, or by absence from a few meetings. They have lived down the "suspicion" with which they were at first regarded, by sedulously abstaining from all appearance of acting as ecclesiastical organizations. When, as in the famous proposals satirized and slain by

John Wise, and in some later attempts, an endeavor has been made to invest clerical associations with some sort of church power, the effort has signally failed; for the churches from the beginning have guarded the principle that, under Christ, the ministry springs from them and is accountable to them, and is not a class of persons either above or co-ordinate with them in authority. We can but conclude, therefore, that, from the nature of their constitution, and the general principles of our polity, the prerogatives of ministerial associations are necessarily so circumscribed that the purpose they subserve, as respects ministerial responsibility, can be better secured by some body organically connected with the churches. For other ends, — especially the promotion of mutual acquaintance and improvement on the part of ministers, — they are naturally adapted and are likely to be maintained. In regions where they have been long established and custom has invested them with powers of usefulness not to be lightly sacrificed, they may continue to act practically for the churches in guarding at various points the integrity and purity of the ministry, in gathering statistics, in approbating candidates, and in similar offices, provided the consciousness be kept alive of such responsibility. But where the traditions are different, and the soil is fresh, the other method of association is now almost everywhere ascendant, and is fitted to be more effective. How easy it is in Congregationalism for a purely clerical body to cease to realize that it has a public function in respect to ministerial standing, may be shown by a single incident, out of many which might be cited: —

An association of ministers in the East contained a member who had committed an offence which his brethren deemed required their withdrawal from him of fellowship. They passed such a vote, with the condition annexed that it should not be made public. They acted squarely on the theory that they were a mere private club. Such action would not be possible in bodies composed of representatives of the churches, such as are now generally established.

Another agency, already noticed, which contributes to the maintenance of ministerial responsibility, is the local conference or association or convention of churches.

Though early suggested in the history of Massachusetts Congregationalism, and established in Connecticut as consociations, they first came into being in the form now prevalent in the then newly constituted State of Maine.

Ex-President Harris, now professor in the Theological Seminary

at New Haven, has very clearly defined the function of conferences in the Congregational system, distinguishing carefully between the council and the conference as follows: "The former" (the council) "is the agency for determining and declaring with whom the churches will have fellowship; the latter" (the conference) "the agency through which the churches that are in fellowship co-operate."

Under this conception of its function, the determination of questions of ministerial standing or fellowship is not the proper work of a conference. This is the generally accepted doctrine where conferences and associations are separate bodies. Where the two are combined, or where one body occupies the ground of both, there is now apparent, chiefly perhaps on account of the defects of our general platform already pointed out, a tendency to transfer to such an organization some of the usual functions of councils; or, where the prerogatives of councils are maintained, to attach primary importance to the district association in expressing and certifying ministerial standing and in maintaining ministerial responsibility. The methods adopted are various, both in character and scope. In some of these associations or conferences an explicit rule is adopted, by which a member becomes responsible to the body, and may be disciplined by it to the extent of withdrawal of fellowship. In some of the States membership in one of the district organizations is essential to membership in the State body. Some local conferences appoint a "Home missionary committee," and prohibit said committee from indorsing any application for home-missionary aid unless the minister for whom aid is sought shall be a member of the conference, or express a purpose to become such. Elsewhere the following rule obtains: —

"This conference, believing that ordained ministers are properly amenable to an ecclesiastical council, will not assume the exercise of discipline over such of its members. When, however, any such member shall be deemed worthy of discipline, if he is not in the employment of a Congregational church, or if such church shall neglect to take the proper steps for bringing him to trial before such a council, then those steps shall be taken by the conference."

One of the State associations represented in this body has adopted the following definition of ministerial standing: —

"By 'ministerial' standing this association understands such membership in some local conference or association as makes the said body responsible for ministers connected with it; *i. e.*, the confer-

ence or association receives its ministerial members on credentials by vote, may arraign, try, and expel them for cause, or dismiss them to corresponding bodies on their own request."

In other regions the district conventions or associations exercise, upon request of some church, or even apparently upon their own instance, the functions of an ecclesiastical council; ordaining ministers, examining charges against them, withdrawing from them recognition and fellowship, and so advising the churches.

Without following into further details local arrangements, we content ourselves with calling attention to several general characteristics of these provisions, and their significance: —

First. They show an increased recognition of the responsibility of the ministry to the communion of churches.

Secondly. They show an increased use of local organizations, whether of ministers or of churches, as a security for ministerial responsibility.

This appears in many ways: —

A. In the construction of some of the State rolls of ministers.

A distinction is made between ordained Congregational ministers who are, and ordained Congregational ministers who are not, members of some local association or conference.

B. In the mode of certifying ministerial standing.

More account is made than formerly of connection with district organizations. The certificate given by an ordaining or dismissing council expresses the judgment of the council on the day when it is issued. But with the present changes in the ministry, such certificates often become very imperfect vouchers. A young man, for instance, is ordained by a council in Maine, and receives papers signed by the moderator and scribe. He preaches a year, then moves to New Hampshire, thence to New York; is for a while out of employment, sells books, acts as agent for a life-insurance company, changes his opinions more or less, loses by long contact with the world his Christian zeal, perhaps something of Christian integrity, resumes preaching, takes a church, finds it prudent not to submit to examination by a council or to any arrangement not easily changed, and rests his whole claim to recognition by Congregational churches, as a minister in good and regular standing, on papers signed a score or more of years ago.

There is obviously need of a better mode of certification; and this is supplied by the growing custom of membership in some permanent local body like an association or conference, whose regula-

tions are made on a principle of responsibility for its members, and whose certificate attests the present standing of its recipient.

C. In determining competency to sit in an ecclesiastical council, whether as the ministerial representative of an invited church or as a Congregational minister.

In Connecticut the following *minute* was adopted by the General Association, in 1877: —

"*Resolved*, That in our judgment any minister who is in regular standing in some body of Congregational ministers or churches may be invited to become a member of a council; and that when a church is served by such a minister, whether he be its pastor or not, that church may be invited to be represented in a council by its minister and a delegate."

This *minute* is instructive in two respects, — as showing the breaking down of the older pastoral limitations of the ministry, and also as evincing the need felt of some equivalent for the security they gave. This equivalent is found in responsibility to some local organization representing directly, or by concession, the churches.

D. In the adoption of specific rules by district associations for the trial of accused members, either with or without the intervention of councils.

"The facts and usages of our denomination respecting ministerial responsibility and standing," which we have now reviewed, lead to several important conclusions. They show, —

First. The need, in our general platforms, of a statement of additional methods for ministerial discipline.

The Boston Platform is, to a considerable extent, a revision of the Cambridge, with great and valuable modifications and enlargements. The facts to which your attention has been turned show that further development is required. Particularly is there need of a definite process of ministerial discipline, resting on the established principle of the responsibility of a Congregational minister to the communion of churches.

Secondly. The need of a more distinct and uniform recognition, by district or local organizations, of their responsibility for the Congregational ministry reported by them for the State minutes and the *Year Book*.

If it should be thought expedient in some localities to continue the custom of reporting these lists through the scribes of purely ministerial associations, instead of through the scribes or a committee of organizations directly connected with the churches, — which is intrinsically the more Congregational method, — we think

that the theory should not be entertained that associations which exercise this public function are mere private clubs. Their responsibility should be equal to the work they assume. If it be wisest that they should continue to act for the churches in the matter of approbating and introducing candidates for the ministry, in making out the roll of ministers for publication, in guarding ministerial standing, and in other ways, and the churches prefer to devolve upon them these responsible duties, it ought to be definitely understood by all parties that such trusts are committed to them.

Thirdly. The need, in the engagement of ministers by individual churches, of more effective methods for securing the interests and rights of sister churches.

Our latest general platform affirms that "a due respect to the communion of the churches requires that no man assuming to be a pastor of a church shall be acknowledged as such by other churches, unless at or after his entrance on the duties of the office he has been publicly recognized by receiving the right hand of fellowship from neighboring churches through a council convened for that purpose. The welfare of the churches . . . requires this safeguard." And the necessity of a council of dismission is insisted on with equal urgency. And yet, of ministers engaged to-day in pastoral work, probably not thirty-six per cent have been installed, or are likely to be. The change is on too large a scale, is too protracted in time, is too steady in its progress, has overcome too many ancient traditions, and too many efforts of local, State, and national organizations to resist its advance, to admit of being longer treated as of temporary and minor significance, or as something to be simply opposed. Yet it breaks down safeguards — to use the word of the platform — which ought not to be destroyed. We think that some arrangement should be made by which the importance of the pastoral office may be more effectually maintained, and the interests and rights of neighboring churches be more securely guarded.

Your committee were instructed to add to their review of facts and usages "such recommendations as they may deem advisable."

Our suggestions are shaped by our convictions as to the needs to be supplied, and they are offered with the explicit understanding that this Council has no authority to prescribe the conditions of ministerial standing, and with the sole purpose of presenting practical methods of action consonant with the fundamental principles of our polity, and adapted to existing wants.

In the *Boston Platform* the churches have a statement of the

principles and usages of their order, which justly claims to be of higher authority than any merely individual or local testimony. This platform from the beginning was connected with a national council, and was published by a committee of that council, through one of the societies recognized by that and subsequent councils. We are assured by the secretary of that society that any changes or additions recommended by this body, or by a committee appointed for such a purpose, can easily be introduced.

Our first recommendation, therefore, proposes the appointment of a committee to make this platform, in certain specified particulars, more complete. The method suggested follows the precedents of its history. For convenience we submit this and the following recommendations in the form of resolutions: —

I. *Resolved*, (1.) That in the judgment of this Council, the statement of Congregational polity published, in 1872, by a committee of the National Council of 1865, needs to be adjusted so as to provide processes for the trial of delinquents belonging to either of the classes[1] of persons specified on page 85 of this report; and so as to secure the responsibility of all ordained ministers to the communion of churches. (2.) That a committee of [*blank*] be appointed by this Council to prepare and publish such needed additions and adjustments.

II. *Resolved*, That the certification of ministerial standing by local ecclesiastical organizations is, in our judgment, a legitimate and timely provision for the protection and purity of the ministry, and we commend its employment, provided that it be understood that a *pro re nata* council of sister churches is the ultimate authority as respects ministerial recognition, and that every Congregational minister, when accused, has the right of trial by such a body.

III. *Resolved*, That we recommend the indication by name in the minutes of the State associations, of the local organization to which each associated minister may belong, and request the publishing committee appointed by this Council to add this information, together with a list of the names of the scribes or registrars of said organizations, to that heretofore given in the *Year Book*.

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[1] The following are the classes referred to: —

I. Ministers who have obtained standing in the Congregational ministry without membership in any church.

II. Ministers who have obtained standing in the Congregational ministry without membership in any Congregational church.

III. Ministers who are not members of the churches they serve, but of other Congregational churches.

IV. Members charged with offences which the churches of which they are members decline to call a council to examine.

V. Ministers who are members of churches they serve, or where they reside, but who have committed offences elsewhere that require investigation.

IV. *Resolved*, That this body, believing that ordained ministers are amenable to an ecclesiastical council, and that some definite provisions should exist in every district by which such persons, when charged with immorality or heresy, may be brought to trial before such a body, submit to the district ministerial and ecclesiastical organizations of our order the following suggestions, with the request that, either by their adoption, or by other means which they may deem more efficient, adequate provision may be made for the maintenance of a due responsibility on the part of all Congregational ministers within their borders to the communion of churches: —

1. That the attention of the churches be called to the evils which result from the introduction to their pulpits of ministers not duly certified as, at the time of their employment, in good and regular standing in the Congregational ministry; and also from the growing practice of "hiring" annually "a supply," who serves as pastor, without consultation with or notice to the neighboring churches; and also from the failure to provide adequate methods for the trial of responsibly accused ministers, founded on the principle of their accountability to the communion of churches.

2. That the churches be invited to appoint annually, in and by each district ecclesiastical organization, one or more committees on ministerial credentials and on the settlement and dismission of ministers, whose duty it shall be, —

(*a*) To prepare for publication the annual list of ministers resident within the limits of said body.

(*b*) To give a hearing to responsible persons bringing specific charges against any Congregational minister within the aforesaid limits, of an offence which would render it proper that he be deposed from the ministry; and if a *prima facie* case is proved to their satisfaction, to request some neighboring church to call a council to examine the charges, the accused person being duly notified and having opportunity to make said council mutual, such a preliminary hearing and request in no case to be allowed where said minister is a member of any Congregational church within the above-mentioned limits, unless it is evident to the committee that that church wilfully neglects to call a council as enjoined in the Boston Platform, Chap. II. 7, 7 (pp. 54, 55).

(*c*) To act as an advisory body in the employment and dismission of a minister when so requested by any church, within the bounds of said organization, which deems either an installing or dismissing council not advisable, said minister to be recognized as pastor of the church so choosing and calling him, when said committee so approve, it being understood that there is a right of appeal from its decision to a regularly constituted ecclesiastical council.

The last proposal, IV. 2 (c), is favored by the committee simply as suggesting an experiment which they deem worthy of trial. If its influence should prove to be seriously unfriendly to the use of installing and dismissing councils, we should regard this as an evil; but we do not anticipate such a result. On the

other hand, it would be a great gain if the principal benefits of such councils could be secured where now they are wholly disused.

The case is simply this: The churches now fail to install their ministers in the great majority of instances. The result is, neglect of the pastoral office, and of the obligation due to sister churches in the engagement of ministers. It appears to be impossible to remedy the evil by commending the disused method. Is not some concession due to the general judgment of the churches in this matter, as expressed in their practice? Cannot some method be devised which will meet the difficulties in the case, so far as these are real and important, while at the same time the pastoral office is honored, and the obligations of fellowship?

The proposal now presented is suggested for your consideration with this intent. One member of your committee, the Rev. Dr. Safford, is opposed to any suggestion by us of such an experiment. The remainder favor it, — without, however, desiring to press it should it be decidedly opposed.

The other recommendations we unanimously approve and commend to your candid and favorable regard, hoping that they may be found to be fitted to meet acknowledged evils, and promotive of the purity, the peace, and the honor of our ministry, and of the well-being of the churches.

EGBERT C. SMYTH.
GEORGE L. WALKER.
GEORGE B. SAFFORD.
HENRY P. HIGLEY.
LEVI H. COBB.

SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT OF MINORITY.

The undersigned, having joined the other members of the committee in approval of the larger part of their report, which recommends certain practical methods of maintaining ministerial responsibility, nevertheless believes that the most important service which this Council can render the churches is to be found in the clear and comprehensive statement of those principles characteristic of our polity, out of which all practical methods should be drawn, and by which they should always be tested.

He therefore offers the following resolutions, containing a statement of principles relating to the matter in hand, and recommends that they be adopted as preliminary to the approval by this Council

of those practical measures which the committee unanimously propose: —

Resolved, I. That this Council disclaims all authority to prescribe the conditions of ministerial standing

Resolved, II. That in the following propositions, this Council indicates its understanding of the essential principles of the Congregational polity, as touching ministerial standing: —

1. Membership in a Congregational church is one of the essential conditions of standing in the Congregational ministry.

2. Every Congregational minister is responsible directly to the church of which he is a member; while that church is also responsible for him to all the churches with which it is, or desires to be, in fellowship.

3. The pastor of a church is, *as such*, responsible solely to the church of which he is pastor.

4. For his standing among the churches every Congregational minister, whether he be pastor or not, is responsible to the churches in council.

5. A minister's responsibility to any ministerial organization, or to any ecclesiastical body, other than a church or the churches in council, is such as his own voluntary action may have made, and is in no sense necessary to his reputable position as pastor of a church, or as an accredited minister of the gospel.

Resolved, III. That in the judgment of this Council, these historic principles of the Congregational polity furnish all necessary provisions for excluding an unworthy minister, whether from the pastorate or from fellowship.

Resolved, IV. That, while various conditions may sanction variety in the practical methods of maintaining ministerial responsibility, yet, in the judgment of this Council, the integrity of our polity requires close conformity to the principles above stated.

Respectfully submitted by

GEORGE B. SAFFORD.

REPORT ON THE CONDITION AND WORK OF THE AMERICAN CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

By request of the trustees of the Congregational Union, the National Council held in Detroit, Michigan, three years since, appointed a committee to confer with a committee of the Union in reference to the then critical and unsatisfactory condition of its affairs. That committee was instructed to act as soon as possible, and to report its action to the next National Council. The committee consisted of the following gentlemen: —

Hon. William B. Washburn, LL. D., Greenfield, Mass.; Dea. E. W. Blatchford, Chicago, Ill.; Amos D. Lockwood, Esq., Providence, R. I.; Rev. E. F. Williams, Chicago, Ill.; Dea. William H. Whitin, Whitinsville, Mass.; Rev. A. F. Beard, D. D., Syracuse, N. Y.; Rev. S. E. Herrick, D. D., Boston, Mass.

William Henry Smith, Esq., New York City; Rev. John O. Means, D. D., Boston, Mass.; Charles G. Hammond, Chicago, Ill.; Hon. William Hyde, Ware, Mass.; Lowell Mason, Esq., Orange, N. J.; Rev. L. T. Chamberlain, D. D., Norwich, Conn.; Rev. William B. Brown, D. D., Newark, N. J., had been previously appointed a committee of the Union. These two committees, four members of the Council's committee only being present, viz., Hon. William H. Washburn, Rev. A. F. Beard, Rev. E. F. Williams, and Dea. William H. Whitin, met at the rooms of the Union in New York City, at 9 a. m., Wednesday, November 21, 1877, and organized themselves into a joint committee, by the choice of the Hon. William B. Washburn as chairman, and the Rev. Dr. Brown as secretary.

Through the information given by the secretary of the Union, the Rev. Dr. Ray Palmer, by unrestricted access to books and papers, and by a detailed statement presented by the society's committee, every possible opportunity was given for thorough investigation and intelligent action. After a full and careful discussion, lasting through six sessions and occupying two days and evenings, the joint committee unanimously agreed to publish a statement calling attention to the purpose for which the Union had been incorporated, nearly twenty-five years before, and giving a history of its work during that time, and containing recommendations as to the course to be pursued in the future. That statement was as follows: —

It appears that "The American Congregational Union" was incorporated under the General Statutes of New York, June 11, 1853, for the following objects: —

"II. The particular business and objects of the society shall be to collect, preserve, and publish authentic information concerning the history, condition, and continued progress of the Congregational churches in all parts of this country, with their affiliated institutions, and with their relations to kindred churches and institutions in other countries; to promote by tracts and books, by devising and recommending to the public plans of co-operating in building meeting-houses and parsonages, and in providing parochial and pastoral libraries, and in other methods, the progress and well-working of the Congregational church policy; to afford increased facilities for mutual acquaintance and friendly intercourse, and helpfulness among ministers and churches in the Congregational order; and, in general, to do whatever a voluntary association of individuals may do, in Christian discretion, and without invading the appropriate field of any existing institution, for the promotion of evangelical knowledge and piety in connection with Congregational principles of church government."

"V. The principal office of said society shall be located in the city of New York."

An Act authorizing the society to hold property was passed by the Legislature of New York, March 15, 1871, as follows: —

"III. It shall be lawful for the American Congregational Union, in the city of New York, to take and hold, by gift, grant, or devise, or otherwise, subject to all provisions of law relating to devises and bequests by last will and testament, and to purchase, hold, and convey any estate, real or personal, the annual income received from such real estate not to exceed the sum of seventy-five thousand dollars, for the purpose of aiding feeble churches in the erection of houses of worship, and to render such aid by gift, or grant, or by loan, either with or without security."

For the first four years the Union was devoted to the general objects recited in the Act of Incorporation. In the year 1857 the specific work of aiding in the erection of churches was entered upon, and since that time has been the principal object of the society.

Precisely twenty years have elapsed since the first grant for church building was made directly by the society. During the first ten years of this period there was one secretary working mainly from Boston, while the principal office was in New York. $241,536 are stated as received and distributed, with an expense of $39,284 for the ten years; an average of $24,153 yearly receipts, and $3,928 yearly expenses. At this time there were no "specials" among the receipts. Since 1866–7 the society has had two secretaries, with offices in New York and Boston. The gross receipts for these ten years are stated at $504,022, of which $212,582 seem to be "specials"; $34,757 moneys refunded from extinct churches and others, and interest, leaving as received and distributed by the Union, directly, $256,683. The expense for these last ten years appears to be $101,730, giving an average of direct receipts and disbursements by the Union of $25,668 per year; and average expenses per year, $10,173. The last year has been unusually disastrous, the gross amounts paid to churches being $21,156, of which $12,806 were specials, while the expenses were $9,771.

The trustees of the Union passed the following resolution September 27, 1877: —

"*Resolved*, That the secretaryship having special charge of the department of finance be discontinued, and that all expenses therefor of salaries and rent cease at the close of the current year or quarter, as may be settled between the incumbent and the finance committee."

Thereupon the incumbent resigned his office, and his resignation was accepted. The other secretary placed his resignation in the hands of the trustees, and on this no action has yet been taken.

The committee make the following recommendations: —

1. That the specific work of church building be made distinctive in the name and in the constitution of the society, and that other work now contemplated in the constitution be transferred to more appropriate agencies; and we suggest, therefore, that steps be taken to change the name to that of "The Congregational Church Building Society."

2. We recommend that the Act of Incorporation and the authorization to hold property be printed in the annual report, and that, in addition to the details of receipts now presented, the "specials" be not only stated, as heretofore, but that they be summed up in columns by themselves, so that the sum total of "specials" and of cash receipts each year may be seen at a glance.

3. We think there should be but one secretary, and that the expenses of salaries, rents, and incidentals should be brought to the lowest point compatible with efficiency.

4. Recognizing the great usefulness in the past of the honored secretary whose department has been chiefly that of administration at the office in New York, the committee think that in the changed condition of things the resignation he has tendered should be accepted, with the understanding that he shall continue to act until a secretary to take charge of both departments of the society shall be secured, which it is desirable to do at the earliest moment practicable. We believe that the new secretary should devote his whole time to the society, and should make it his special duty to interest the churches and individuals in the work of church building, to the end of securing more liberal contributions.

5. The question whether the society should be continued in its present form, or whether by affiliation with some other organization the great objects of the society can be better secured, has received careful consideration; and information has been sought from all available sources. The committee recommend that, for the sake of economy and efficiency, without impairing the corporate and practical integrity of the Church Building Society, an effort be made to connect the office in New York with the rooms of the American Home Missionary Society; and so to arrange that the secretaries, with such clerical aid as is necessary, may assist in the distinctively office work, thus leaving the secretary of the Church Building Society the more free to devote himself to his general public work. We suggest that, if this plan prove feasible, the invaluable and responsible co-operation of the A. H. M. S. will be more fully secured, and the employment of one secretary for the Building Society be rendered manifestly practicable. The expense involved in the room and clerical aid contemplated by such arrangement should be assumed by the Church Building Society.

6. In conclusion we put on record our judgment that the beneficence and urgency of the work of a Church Building Society were never more manifest than at present. Accordingly, under a grateful sense of the blessings which have come from such work in the past, we earnestly commend this cause to the Congre-

gational churches throughout our land. We trust that a sound, efficient administration of the society, and the abundant bestowal of the divine favor, will unite us all in gifts and labors and prayers for this great department of the Master's Kingdom.

WM. B. WASHBURN,
WILLIAM H. WHITIN,
EDWARD F. WILLIAMS,
A. F. BEARD,
Committee of the National Council

CHAS. G. HAMMOND,
WM. H. SMITH,
JOHN O. MEANS,
WM. B. BROWN,
WILLIAM HYDE,
LOWELL MASON,
L. T. CHAMBERLAIN,
Committee of the Congregational Union.

These recommendations were in part carried into effect by the choice in the spring of 1878 of the Rev. William B. Brown, D. D., as secretary; a man to whose self-sacrificing, enthusiastic, and efficient labors the present prosperous condition of the Union is almost entirely due. It is only just to your committee to say that some of us still feel that the name of the society stands in the way of its highest success. We are aware that eminent legal talent has decided adversely to the proposed change of name. Were some generous-minded individual to leave the Union a few hundred thousand dollars on condition that this change be brought about, and that, too, without vitiating its title to moneys or realty now in its possession, or hereafter to come into its possession, we are confident that the legacy would be accepted. At any rate, the experiment is worth trying.

Grateful for the growing confidence in the Union as its affairs are now administered, we commend it anew to the sympathy, the prayers, and the gifts of all our churches; and in view of the intimate relation which church building bears to the future welfare of our country and the work of missions, it is our deliberate conviction that the receipts of the Union should not be less than a hundred thousand dollars a year.

That the demands of this work may be more fully understood, your committee have requested the Rev. Dr. Brown to supplement this report with a brief account of the changes which the recom-

mendations of the joint committee have already brought about, and a brief survey of the field now open.

Respectfully submitted,

EDWARD F. WILLIAMS.
WILLIAM H. WHITIN.
A. F. BEARD.

STATEMENT OF THE AMERICAN CONGREGATIONAL UNION.

Moderator and Brethren:

I am asked by your committee to state what the Congregational Union has done in response to its recommendations of nearly three years ago, — to which you have just now listened, — and also to explain the present position and needs of the society.

Three years ago the American Congregational Union, the only national society ever organized by Congregationalists in this country in the interests of their own church life and work, was in a critical condition. The causes of that condition we need not now consider.

The Committee of Conference appointed by the National Council at Detroit has reported the changes that, after mature deliberation, were recommended to the board of trustees. It is but just to say, however, that the changes proposed by the joint committee were in effect what the trustees, for obvious reasons, had already decided upon.

In the spring of 1878 the two secretaryships were united in one; the Boston office with all its expenses was discontinued; the expenses in New York were materially reduced: so that the cost of administration was cut down one half. The treasurer, who gives but little time to the work, is now without salary; and the only persons who receive pay for services rendered of any sort whatever are the secretary and one office clerk, who devote their whole time to the society.

The work of the Union is now confined to church building, and the care of church property after the houses are completed and last bills paid. All incidental and side enterprises are abandoned.

The name of the society has not been changed: partly because the able legal counsel to which the matter has been twice referred has each time decided that the name cannot be changed without great difficulty and great danger to the property interests of the society; and partly because on reflection its name is no less indica-

tive of its own work than are the names of our other great benevolent societies, — for example, that of the American Board, which is more suggestive of a lumber-yard than of a great foreign missionary society, or, not to mention others, that of the American Missionary Association, which conveys no hint even that the chief work of the society is the education of the freedmen. The Congregational Union holds claim of one sort or another on about $3,000,000 of property; and is, we hope, favorably mentioned in various wills. A change of name, even if the Legislature consented, would be perilous. Let the churches come to understand the work and be thoroughly awake to its importance, and they will have no more difficulty with this name than they have with that of the American Board. If one should be changed, why not both, and all?

As regards the old question of specials, referred to in the committee's report, and which has for years been so misleading and unsatisfactory, a complete change has been made. The word is excluded from our vocabulary. Nothing is now reported as received that does not come directly into our treasury, or that is not actually covered and protected by our trust mortgage. If churches give money directly to churches that are struggling to build houses of worship, instead of giving it through the Union, the responsibility is their own; and if they ask the Union to report such moneys as a part of its receipts, our reply is that we only report what we actually protect. Money so given is seldom afterwards covered by our trust mortgage; but if it ever should be, then, and not sooner nor otherwise, will it be reported. This plan causes us to throw out annually thousands of dollars, that under the old system would have been counted; but it leaves the responsibility where it belongs, and saves the society from professing to do what it did not and could not do. If our churches will contribute their church building money through the Church Building Society, as they do their home-missionary money through the Home Missionary Society, and their foreign-missionary money through the Foreign Missionary Society, we should never again hear of specials; and one half of what is given directly to struggling churches would not, as now, be practically thrown away.

The amount of property on which the Congregational Union has conditional claim is now very large, and is increasing constantly. Churches do sometimes fail, and when loans are made they are not always refunded according to agreement. Under the old contract system the difficulties were far greater than they are under the present trust mortgage plan; but under any system, constant

vigilance and much labor are required to prevent losses. The work of looking after endangered grants and loans is now receiving especial attention. When churches live, as most do, all is well; but if they die out, or cease to be evangelical Congregational churches, it is scarcely possible, under our present system, that anything should be lost. Thus far about $50,000 has been refunded. When churches fail they often throw the whole property into our hands, and we sometimes receive twice the amount of the original grant.

Our plans, thus modified, have worked successfully for the last two and a half years. During this period the society has been steadily gaining in public confidence. In the year 1878, the number of churches that contributed to this cause was 106, greater than had ever before contributed in a single year; and in 1879 there was an increase of 171 church contributions over those of the preceding year. And the aggregate amount of real, available contributions has also increased in about the same ratio. It is a fact worth note that last year, out of 780 churches that made collection for this cause, 467 — 77 more than one half — were from out of New England; and the aggregate of what these Western churches gave was only one fifth less than what all New England contributed. The condition and prospects of the society were never brighter and more hopeful than now. And yet our funds are wholly inadequate to meet the urgent calls that are made upon us. We not only have to put off and delay important cases, but in the end are often obliged to cut down the amount of our appropriations to a point that still leaves the churches in distress, and tempts them to go abroad and collect funds in their own name. With $100,000 a year, and no less, can the work demanded by this society be properly performed; and twice that sum could be profitably expended.

Among the reasons why that amount should be given annually, and why every church should put the Congregational Union on its regular list, making it the peer of the other benevolent societies, are these: —

1. The little churches themselves require and deserve such aid. For the most part they are on the border lines. Their membership is small and poor. In planting churches amidst difficulties, they do it, not for themselves, but for generations coming. In this foundation work a burden rests on them which they cannot carry alone. Their great need, next to their need of God, is a roof-tree over their heads. Till they have this, they have no permanence, or power, or conceded claim on denominational comity. A meeting-house is

the visible sign of permanence and prosperity; so that as a rule, the church in a new place that builds first holds the fort through coming decades. But to build these houses a little outside help must come; and the few who stand in the front as picket guards have a right to expect sympathy and aid from the strong churches that are behind them, and whose children they are. As a rule, if these little churches cannot be housed they should not have been born. With sanctuaries they will soon take care of themselves not only, but will help to save the nation and world. Without them they must pine and perish. Therefore they require and deserve liberal aid.

2. Such aid is no more necessary to the little churches themselves than it is to the general cause of home missions. The Home Missionary Society and the Congregational Union, though in the same field, have distinct lines of work. One has to do directly with missionaries, the other with churches and church building. If one society is the right hand of our home-missionary work, the other is its left, and neither can prosper without the other. If a sanctuary is of but little value without a minister, so the minister is comparatively worthless without a sanctuary.

It should be known that in most of the States and Territories west of the Missouri, from one half to two thirds of the home-missionary churches are houseless; that not one of these churches will ever become self-sustaining till it has a house of worship; that could each church have as much, once for all, to build sanctuaries as many of them receive from the Home Missionary Society year by year to support preaching, one half of them would become almost at once self-supporting and contributing churches. Without such aid, notwithstanding they have missionaries, they will generally decline; and under the law known as the "survival of the fittest" will finally, and at no distant day, cease to exist. We cannot afford to carry on home-missionary work apart from church-building work, as facts, if presented, would reveal. It is far too expensive. It can be shown that at least one half of all that is given annually to the Congregational Union is so much saved annually to the Home Missionary Society, by lessening to that extent demands on its treasury. Every argument for large contributions to the home-missionary work is equally an argument for the church-building work. The two causes are mutually dependent, and must stand or fall together.

3. The liberal support of the Congregational Union is essential to the work of the American Board. The success of foreign mis-

sions is measured by the extent and ability of its constituency. Note, then, the following facts:—

(1.) About one tenth of the heathen world has been set apart to the American Board to be evangelized by its agency.

(2.) The American Board now rests for its support on the Congregational churches of this land.

(3.) While, then, these churches have one tenth of the foreign missionary work to do, they are not together one fortieth part of Protesant Christendom.

(4.) The Congregational churches of New England, owing to the coming in of foreign elements, of other denominations, the going away of young men, and other causes, have not for the last twenty-eight years, taken as a whole, been increasing in strength, but have relatively, if not actually, declined.

(5.) Twelve or fifteen years ago the whole New-School Presbyteterian Church and the Dutch Reformed Church, which, till then, had given their entire strength to foreign missions through the American Board, withdrew from it, taking off in an hour one half of its constituency.

Now, suppose that these things had all taken place before our system of church-building work had been inaugurated westward, or suppose it had not been inaugurated at all; where would be the American Board to-day, and where prospectively? Our churches, by unparalleled exertion, giving nearly twice as much per member to foreign missions as is given by any other of the leading denominations, have thus far kept up the work. But its ground of hope for future enlargement turns on the growth of its constituency; and that growth, if it exist at all, must be developed westward. Indeed, the churches which the Union has helped to build in the West gave to the American Board and to the Home Missionary Society — to each of them — last year more than twice as much in cash, about five times as much jointly, as all the churches in America gave to its treasury. Take away the one thousand meeting-houses that the Union has helped to build in the Northwest and West, and where now would be the Woman's Board of the Interior? It would not even exist. Twenty-five or thirty years from now the American Board will be as much dependent on the churches of the West, both for funds and for missionaries, as it will be on those of the East, and in fifty years far more so. How do these facts show that every friend of the American Board should, for that reason if there were no others, be a liberal supporter of the Congregational Union!

4. Proper self-respect as a denomination, and reasonable desire for our own church extension, demand that the Congregational Union should have ample support. Instead of being numerically almost at the tail-end of the denominations, we should stand to-day in the fore-front. We were on this continent doing our work a hundred years before there was a Presbyterian organization in America, and more than that before there was a Methodist; but we were so afraid of seeming to be sectarian, that we neglected our own children to care for other people's. We acted as if we had no principles that we felt bound to respect; and so, out of New England, we ceased to be respected. We drove our own children out of doors and compelled them to die of neglect, or else go over to their neighbors for shelter and life. For one hundred years Congregationalists were "God's silly people." The great National Council at Albany in 1852, out of which the Congregational Union was born, was our new departure, and the greatest single event in our Congregational history that has taken place since the landing of the Pilgrims on Plymouth Rock. We then first discovered that we were a denomination, bound together by common principles, a common history, a common fellowship, and by mutual responsibilities and privileges that extended west of the Hudson River. At that time three fourths of our churches, and seven eighths of our membership and wealth, were in New England. Now, three fifths of our churches and more are out of New England, and a large proportion of our strength every way; and still the tide of Congregational empire westward takes its course. Little churches of our sort are multiplying constantly; and if we secure their establishment and permanence by helping them to houses of worship, in less than fifty years we shall have regained, not in New York and Ohio, but westward, very much of what was so thoughtlessly thrown away. All the denominations have church-building societies; and whatever else they neglect, these societies, that give homes to the little churches and make them citadels of strength, are not neglected. They do not, as we have done, kill the geese that lay the golden eggs. They love and foster their own children. If Congregationalists do the same we shall grow as they have grown. We are now doing it in part, and so in part we have our reward. But give what your committee recommend annually to the Congregational Union, and there will be established on a safe and permanent basis, each year, from one hundred to one hundred and fifty Congregational churches. Shall it be done?

5. Such liberal support of the Congregational Union is demanded by *national considerations*. No one familiar with history doubts that our free government owes its origin and perpetuity to the influence, direct and indirect, of the Pilgrim fathers. And no one doubts that in the late civil war it was the iron and tonic in the blood of the North and Northwest, flowing down from the old Pilgrims, that put down the rebellion and saved the country from complete overthrow. When we recall that one half of our national domain is yet unsettled, and that our present population is to be doubled in the next fifty years, gravitating westward; when we reflect upon the incoming tide of foreign immigration, of German infidelity, of Roman Catholicism, and other evil influences, no one can doubt that the near future is full of peril. One chief agency in the coming crisis for maintaining civil liberty and suppressing antagonistic influences must be the planting of churches westward with advancing civilization. And to plant churches is not enough. We must plant churches that in the dark and stormy days can be trusted to stand up for God and man, for truth and justice, for liberty and order. The field is now ripe for the harvest. Dakota, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Indian Territory, Idaho, Nevada, and even Utah are now calling for help. In a few years the favorable opportunity will have passed. On national grounds, then, if there were no other, we should arise and build. This is the demand alike of patriotism, philanthropy, and religion.

6. Finally, the Congregational Union is deserving of liberal support on account of the principles and economy of its administration. Its principles and methods must commend themselves to every thoughtful business man. We do not build churches where they are not needed. One third of our meeting-houses are from three to fifty miles from any other. We give limited sums, and these in such way as to stimulate endeavor and enable societies to do twice as much themselves as otherwise would seem possible. We only pay last bills; so that every church is dedicated wholly to the Lord, and not to the sheriff. Our gifts are protected from loss should any church fail; and the trust mortgage held by the Union keeps the churches from becoming subsequently involved in debt, as money cannot be borrowed on second mortgage. Sanctuaries brought to completion by the Union, as a rule, double at once the size and strength of congregations, and bring them into speedy self-support.

In the last twenty-seven years, the society has aided in the erection of about 1,100 Congregational meeting-houses, including the Albany Fund churches, which is more than one third of all in the land. Of the churches west of Ohio, including Michigan, the Union has helped to build at least three fourths, and yet the work has but just commenced. In the two States of Kansas and Nebraska there are now existing 273 Congregational Church organizations; but in both those States there are only 98 Congregational meeting-houses, and there the Congregational Union has helped to build 102. There are, then, in those two States alone, 175 houseless home-missionary churches that must soon build if they are to live and prosper; and the number in the next ten years will be doubled. In the still newer regions, the facts are yet more startling. Our work grows in urgency and extent every day.

In the administration of the Union the strictest economy is maintained. One secretary and one clerk, giving their whole time to the society, and having medium salaries, are indispensable to the continuance of the work. Our working capital last year was about $43,000. Had it been twice that sum the cost of administration would have been no greater. If any one now complains that the expenses are too great for the receipts, our reply is that the receipts are too small for the expenses. The expenses cannot be less; and if the statements of this paper are at all to be relied on, the receipts ought to be doubled. The society has adopted all the recommendations of the joint committee, — unless the change of name be an exception, — and moves in the direction to which they point. If further inquiry is desired, we solicit from every quarter investigation and suggestion. We court honest criticism. This work belongs to the churches and not to the trustees; and on them rests the responsibility of carrying it forward. If this Council will adopt the report of your committee, and the churches will carry out the recommendation, each doing its part, and give us annually $100,000, the work of Congregational church building shall keep pace with Congregational church organization until the great West is dotted over with churches that shall stand up for God and humanity, aid in all benevolent work, become to civil government a bulwark of defence, and remain a monument to coming generations of the grace and power of God, accomplished through his people in laying foundations when foundations were the condition of future success and reward.

WILLIAM B. BROWN, *Secretary.*

REPORT CONCERNING DISABLED MINISTERS.

At the National Council held in Detroit, 1877, a committee on "Disabled Ministers and their Families" was appointed, with instructions as follows: "To issue a circular letter calling the attention of the churches of our order throughout the country to this important subject, and urging upon them the claims of those godly, self-sacrificing men and women who have wrought so efficiently in the vineyard of the Lord; to communicate with State organizations already formed for this object; to seek to secure similar organizations in States where none now exist; to stimulate in all practicable ways the ministration of needed relief; and to report their doings, with recommendations, at the next triennial Council."

That committee respectfully submit the following: They issued a circular letter, which was printed in the *Congregational Year Book* of 1879. In that, mention was made of the fact that many true and devoted ministers of Christ, through age or infirmity, have been laid aside from work, and left with their families under the pressure of great want. Appeal was also made in the circular letter to the churches, and especially to State conferences and associations, to give the matter of "Ministerial Relief" their earliest attention. Further, a general plan was suggested as guide for such as might be led to seek State organization.

In addition to this circular letter, personal letters have been written, and personal effort made in other ways to bring the matter before the churches and conferences of the country.

How influential these agencies have been, your committee do not know. They have reason, however, to feel that the subject has commanded the approval of all, and enlisted the co-operation of many; and that we are approaching a time when these needy classes will be cheerfully and generously ministered unto by individuals and churches appreciating the claim of such self-sacrificing devotion to the cause of Christ.

A few weeks ago above thirty letters were sent into the different States, making inquiry as to the condition of the cause, and seeking suggestions as to further action.

From replies to these letters the following facts are gleaned: —

Maine. — In Maine there is no State organization; their nearest approach to it being the "Maine Charitable Association," organized for the relief of families of deceased ministers. In reference to

the need of such organization, the suggestion comes that their "State Missionary Society employs men who are too old to do effective work, because they need help"; also the confession of a long-felt need in this direction, and the assurance that steps will be taken to effect a State organization in harmony with the spirit of your committee's appeal.

New Hampshire. — New Hampshire has an organization called the "Widows' Charitable Fund," dating back to 1815. In July, 1866, by legislative Act, the title was amended so as to read, "The Ministers' and Widows' Charitable Fund." The trustees of that society may hold funds for the support of necessitous clergymen and widows of clergymen, to an amount not exceeding $30,000. They have aided all applicants thus far, and have at present an invested fund of nearly $12,000.

The distinctive features of this New Hampshire organization are: 1st. That aid is rendered only to such ordained ministers as are residents of the State and have ministered statedly at least one year to Congregational or Presbyterian churches in the State and are connected with some one of the district associations. 2d. That aid is rendered to widows and children of such deceased ministers as are described above. The churches of New Hampshire contribute to this society, and a considerable amount is realized from what are called "Memorial Members," — persons becoming such by the payment of $10 each. The amount gathered in the year ending June last was $2,100, of which $1,000 was a legacy.

Vermont. — The General Convention of Vermont organized in 1858 the "Fairbanks Board for the Relief of Ministers and Relief of Widows and Orphans." In 1877 it reported an invested fund of $13,900, and receipts amounting to $1,800. Aid was given that year to twelve persons, to the amount of $1,350.

Massachusetts. — In Massachusetts we find traces of an "organized effort to meet the wants of destitute families of deceased clergymen, as early as 1786. Ever since then, funds have been disbursed to widows and orphans of orthodox and Unitarian ministers. The amount of this fund has been constantly increasing, until it amounts to $160,000. There is a smaller fund of ancient origin, the proceeds of which are distributed among widows of deceased clergymen. More recently there has been organized in Massachusetts a "Board of Ministerial Aid," chartered by the State, and limited in its charities to Congregational ministers of Massachusetts, with allowance sometimes to help their widows.

This originated in the State Association. That board has already an invested fund of about $7,000. As to needy cases in Massachusetts, a pastor thus writes: "They are of all grades of necessity, of all forms of disease and helplessness, — men once fortunate and honored as leaders of God's elect, whom we never mention as needy ones because of the sadness of their suffering." In that State each minister seems to be constituted a committee of one to seek to find out want, and secure money to relieve it.

New York. — New York has taken hold of this matter of ministerial relief with commendable spirit. At the annual meeting of the State Association in October, 1878, an organization was effected, entitled the "New York Congregational Ministers' Fund Society," a name whose size it is hoped will be prophetic of its beneficence. At the start, a circular was issued, inviting ministers and churches to send in their annual contributions. The special recommendations of the trustees in regard to the raising of funds were, That a collection be taken at the Lord's Supper by the General Association; that all the local associations and conferences take a similar collection for the same purpose at each observance of the same ordinance by them; that each church set apart ten per cent of all their sacramental collections for the same object; and that each minister contribute one dollar annually. The report of the first year's work was not very flattering, — $173. The report of this last year indicated the contribution of about $400.

Rhode Isdand. — A "Board of Trustees of Ministerial Fund" was organized in Rhode Island in 1867. This was incorporated. Its receipts for 1877 were $221; aid was granted to one minister, and money loaned another.

Connecticut. — In Connecticut a State organization was effected in 1864, called the "Trustees of the Fund for Ministers," though the widows and orphans of ministers are also aided. That organization has raised from 1864 to 1879, inclusive, over $42,000. The trustees are fifteen in number, and are appointed annually by the General Conference. These trustees appoint their secretary and treasurer, and make annual report to the General Conference. Funds are secured by annual circular to each church, and such personal influence as can be exerted. Since the organization of this Connecticut society, of the 298 churches in the State all but 19 have made donations, and this last year 119 churches have contributed.

In 1864 the contributions amounted to $563. In 1867 they had

increased to nearly $2,000; and in 1869 to nearly $3,000. From that time until the present they have ranged between $2,300 and $3,000. I believe it is the plan of this Connecticut society to distribute the entire annual income among the needy in their State, save where legacies or donations oblige investment.

Ohio. — In Ohio, at the last annual meeting of the State Association, a society was organized, entitled "The Board of Ministerial Relief." This board is limited in its benefactions to infirm or disabled clergymen, who are residents of the State, and to widows and orphans of deceased clergymen, who, at the time of their death, resided in the State, and were in regular connection with the State or some local conference. This board appoint their secretary and treasurer annually; seek contributions from individuals and churches according to such methods as they may devise, consider all applications, and report annually to State society.

Illinois. — Illinois has just completed the incorporation of a body under the name of "The Illinois Ministerial Relief Society." For some years previous, small contributions have been made for the object above indicated, and the amount distributed by some member of the State Association. The sum realized last year was $707. Eight applicants were aided, and most of the same are reported as sure to suffer this winter unless further aid is rendered them.

Wisconsin. — There is no organization in Wisconsin, although the general subject of ministerial relief has been presented in the State conventions, and contributions taken. Last year a committee was appointed on permanent organization. This year that committee reported; but on account of different views in the Convention as to details, the matter was referred back to the committee to report next year. Undoubtedly the society will be then launched.

Minnesota. — In Minnesota there is a "Widows' and Orphans' Aid Society," which provides also for the relief of indigent ministers. That society has several hundred dollars on hand; and at the last meeting of Conference there was general agreement to push the work of collecting funds.

A peculiarity of this Minnesota society is, that to secure benefit for self or family, the minister must pay at least one dollar a year (how many years is not stated), and not more than one third of the income of the funds can be used any year, until the fund amounts to $10,000.

Missouri. — There is a "Widows' and Orphans' Fund" con-

nected with the General Association of Missouri, which has had a kind of inanimate existence for several years. There is, however, no permanent organization in that State.

California. — In 1872, the General Association of California appointed a committee on "Provision for Ministers or their Families in Need," to receive and disburse funds for that object. No definite organization there.

This completes the list of States from which word has been received of organizations effected; and it will be discovered that while the *object* of all these State societies is the same, there is a vast difference in their plans of raising funds and in their methods of dispensing them.

In *New Hampshire*, for example, in addition to collections from the churches, they have the "Memorial Fund"; but no minister can be aided unless he has ministered statedly one year in the State.

In *New York* their method of raising funds is collections at the sacramental seasons of their State and local conferences, and ten per cent of all their local church sacramental collections.

In *Connecticut* they send out an annual circular to each church and seek an annual collection. From the amount realized by this Connecticut society in the fifteen years of its existence ($45,000), the Connecticut plan would seem to commend itself to all the States.

In *Minnesota* they have a kind of mutual insurance company; those who are to receive the benefit of funds collected being obliged to make an annual payment of at least one dollar, and aid in the the accumulation of a fund, which must amount to $10,000 before more than one third of its income can be appropriated, no matter what the pressure of the need may be.

As to the other States heard from, — Indiana, Kansas, Nebraska, Colorado, New Jersey, Georgia, — no steps have been taken to effect an organization. One pastor writes: "We are so engaged in the smoke and conflict of the battle that we have not yet got so far as caring for the wounded," — though he freely confesses that it ought to be done.

Certainly it ought to be done. Soldiers are far more ready to enlist if they know that surgeons are to be on the field and hospital supplies at hand.

The credit of our country in the late war was that provision was made for the wounded before the battle-field was covered. The

fairest monuments of our country's gratitude to-day are the "Soldiers and Orphans' Homes," where the people's offering is made to those who wrought redemption for us at such fearful cost.

Enlistments will be far more rapid for the great spiritual campaign if they who would have our land evangelized insure to these enlisting men and women tender care should they fall enfeebled in their work. The churches of our order could do no greater service to the cause of Christ than by hospital provision: too late often to buy timber and erect the building, when the cold and hungry and worn-out warrior sends his appeal to us.

We have an immeasurable West where to preach the gospel. It is fast filling up, not with capitalists, but with sturdy common laborers, who are scattering over the plains and settling on the hillsides. Our frontier is pushing westward. The balance of power is to be beyond the valley of the Mississippi.

Shall our civil and religious institutions be preserved to us? Not unless this immeasurable West is Christianized. If it is to be Christianized it must be wrought upon by the power of the living preacher. If the preacher is to give himself to this work, he must be assured that when age or infirmities come on he will not have to beg, and that his widow and orphan children will not be left unsheltered. All this talk about *faith* sounds well, but "*bear ye one another's burdens*" is gospel.

The Congregational polity seems peculiarly adapted to these new fields. Union churches somehow seem to drift that way. Let them come into our blessed freedom, but let us man them with as royal talent as graces any Eastern pulpit.

We all praise the polity of the "American Board" as to the care of its missionaries in securing comfortable, promptly paid salaries, in pledging them a good vacation when they are weakened by service and exposure, in educating their children, and in caring for them when age comes on.

Shall we give to our equally heroic home missionaries a little annual pittance to eke out a half-starving salary and leave them to shiver in the cold or waste with hunger?

Your committee plead for provision for the *disabled*, not for their sake only, but for the sake of the home-missionary work, which is demanded of us in this throbbing age; and it seems to the committee that the older, richer States ought to rally for the help of the *newer* and the *poorer* ones.

Your committee recommend: —

First. Immediate steps toward organizing and incorporating ministerial relief boards in each State, where such boards are not already organized, such boards to be under the control of the State Conference or Association.

Second. The plan of personal appeal by circular annually to each local church in the State and personal effort to secure funds and legacies from private individuals.

Third. The investment of funds, if they are invested in such manner as that they can be used, if need be, without waiting for the accumulation of a stated amount.

Fourth. The setting of the cause in such a light before the people as that the givers shall not feel that they are bestowing a charity or the receivers shall be embarrassed in the aid received.

Fifth. Removal of such limitations as to the disbursements of funds as necessitate ministerial labor in a certain State before aid can be secured from that State organization, though the applicant be a resident of said State.

Your committee recommend this radical change in the plans already adopted by one State, for the reason that a minister may have been born and educated, for example, in New Hampshire, and have immediately entered on home-missionary work in Wisconsin or Missouri, and in this poorly paid frontier work, having become wasted by disease or worn out with age, may return to his native State to spend his few declining years in the home of his childhood and be buried with his kindred. In such a case — which surely is not an imaginary one — it seems to the committee that there is as clear and just a claim for aid as if the disabled man had happened to minister statedly at least one year to a church in New Hampshire.

Sixth. That discretionary power be given to State boards as to aiding the needy in other States when application is made by the board of another State, or by responsible parties there. This recommendation is made because the younger States, the most of whose churches are small and of limited resources, may be utterly unable to render assistance to all the needy disabled in their borders. It may often happen that men will fall in States where no provision has been made for the disabled, or when the provision is wholly inadequate. Shall such be left to suffer, with accumulated funds in other States for which there is no demand? Already there is a fund of $12,000 in New Hampshire, $7,000 in Massachusetts, and smaller amounts in other States. In all probability the call for

aid from resident ministers in these States will not be as imperative as the call from other States. The most worthy and the most needy may be found in States the *least able* to raise a relief fund.

If we call for missionaries for these fields, we ought not to leave them to starve or beg when worn out there, or leave widows and children in want, whose husbands and fathers have wrought and watched on the outer walls; and just here let it be remembered that the wives of ministers in many, in *most* cases, do as efficient work as the ministers themselves, thus having claim on the churches, as much more sacred as they are more sensitive and helpless when left in want. Your committee are unable to see better reasons for sending funds to these mission fields for the support of missionaries in them, or for the building of churches, than for the help of the disabled.

There would be many advantages in a national organization to which the State boards should be auxiliary, and with which they should co-operate. Such a society would have arms long enough to reach across the land. It might become the trustee of legacies and donations designed for wider services than the State. But there may be in the minds of some objections to a national organization. If the above recommendations are adopted and carried out, many of the advantages of such an organization will be secured.

With the facts before us, your committee feel that arguments would be superfluous concerning the need of such provision as is contemplated in their report.

The above, therefore, is respectfully submitted, in the hope that the recommendations will be adopted as a whole, or with such amendments as will secure the hearty co-operation of the churches and conferences of the land.

J. E. TWITCHELL.
W. H. MOORE.
H. N. GATES.

REPORT UPON PASTORLESS CHURCHES AND CHURCHLESS PASTORS.

The committee on Pastorless Churches and Churchless Pastors, consisting of Rev. Frank P. Woodbury, of Illinois, Rev. Robert West, of Missouri, Rev. Charles H. Richards, of Wisconsin, Rev. Moses Smith, of Michigan, Rev. Lewis W. Hicks, of Vermont, Rev. William S. Palmer, D. D., of Connecticut, and Rev. Henry M. Dexter, D. D., of Massachusetts, would respectfully report as follows: —

The committee was constituted for a deliberate examination of the facts, to receive suggestions, and to report anything practicable and valuable which might thus come to light; we have confined our efforts to the work thus set before us. We have not undertaken to devise plans or to set any new machinery going; we have no novel invention to propose for vote in the Council; but we have sought out diligently the facts, welcomed suggestions from every quarter, and give the results of these inquiries so far as it can be done in a report of forty minutes.

Upon the resolution which was referred to the committee, directing an inquiry into "the practicability and expediency of securing a proper support to every pastor in the denomination," our correspondence has shed no light, but seems to indicate an utter incredulity about the practicability of securing or attempting to secure such a support. In every sphere of life some are predestined to be poorly paid. In the highest spheres of life the poorness of payment in proportion to the value of services rendered is proverbial. In every sphere of life there are men that are not worth any support; and to insure support to ministers that are worthless seems to promise no good. The fact that the average income of ministers is no better than that of the better class of manual day-laborers doubtless argues a despicable niggardliness on the part of very many so-called Christian congregations, and a condition of severe poverty on the part of very many more; but no suggestion has been made to the committee by which this state of things can be remedied. In default of favorable propositions or plans in our correspondence, we have no recommendation to make on this subject.

The task before us, of investigating facts and causes concerning pastorless churches and churchless pastors, is not a pleasant one; for it has to do with a dark side of church work, — with faults and

failures, wrecks, vacancies, and weaknesses. Nor can we be relieved by imagining that the ills which we investigate are confined to our free system of church association. They invade the centralized forms of church government with equal persistence and injury. A prominent Episcopal bishop declares of that denomination that he does "not know what has gotten hold of the churches; . . . that the average duration of the pastorate does not exceed two years, — then the people weary of their rectors and dislodge them to make room for others no abler than their predecessors." The Presbyterian General Assembly received several overtures last spring asking for "special action to remedy the great evil to the church arising from so many unemployed ministers, and yet so many vacant churches," and also an appeal from a Western presbytery which reads more like a prolonged shriek of agony than like a formal ecclesiastical overture: "We affirm that this is what even the smallest of our churches are doing. . . . weak and struggling churches that have to depend on the boards for the means of life, driving off their ministers for no other reason than that there is a little weariness and declension, and that a change of pastors would probably bring about a better state of affairs. . . . Then they avail themselves of the only alternative, and continually call the new man; and thus the old hateful, grinding, torturing process goes on. . . . We must solemnly affirm that the actual condition of some of these things in the church is absolutely inconceivable by those unacquainted with the facts, or who have not been subjected to the terrible tyranny; it is simply horrible." The evil of brief and intermittent pastorates and churches left vacant, is one to which, in the words of another ecclesiastical body, "by far the greater portion of *all* the Protestant ministers can bear testimony."

In prosecuting our inquiries, an extensive and laborious correspondence has been carried on with pastors, church clerks, and other church officers, secretaries of the state and local associations and conferences, home-missionary superintendents, and many others, ministers and laymen. We regret that the limits of this report make impracticable even an allusion to the great number of interesting letters thus received. A special correspondence has also been held with a large number of the ministers who have maintained exceptionally *long* pastorates; and a compilation of their replies, combined with an analysis of the salient points made by our other correspondents, would make a most interesting and useful book; but the reading of a book here would be an infliction which it is not

for us to undertake or the Council to submit to. These letters have been carefully *analyzed* for such facts and conclusions as they contain. We asked our correspondents to indicate on memorandum blanks the main causes of the premature disruptions of the pastorate within their personal knowledge. Nearly 3,500 cases have been reported to us, some with great particularity, very many by number only, and a few quite indefinitely. The positive numbers received are of no value as such; because, although the replies are from localities distributed to all parts of the country, some cases are doubtless duplicated by different correspondents. But the *proportion* of the different causes to each other and to the whole number reported will convey, we believe, trustworthy and instructive information.

The great and leading cause of this evil, reported from every side, is the smallness and consequent weakness and poverty of a certain number of the churches. It is mere commonplace to say that small and poor churches would be less likely to maintain a long pastorate than others. In such a church the power of a disaffected minority, or of a single discontented member of the parish, is vastly increased. The withdrawal of one or two often ends in the disruption of the pastorate, from the minister's sheer inability to live on an income thus made seriously less than what furnished but a bare and scanty livelihood before. But we were not prepared for the prominence, not to say the predominance, of the disruptions and vacancies reported on this ground. No less than six hundred and forty-four were attributed to financial causes solely, and four hundred and eighty-four, or seventy-five per cent, of these were connected with the poverty of the congregations, the undue multiplication of feeble churches in small villages, and their tardy and unwilling support of ministers. Such causes as these evidently constitute by far the largest proportion within the knowledge of our correspondents. We find their reports very strongly confirmed by facts derived from the statistical minutes of the churches in respect to the relation of these weak churches to the vacant pulpits in the denomination. A church with a list of fifty members or less, not deducting absentees, is certainly not a large church, or usually a strong church financially. But we have 1,272 of such churches, and nearly eight hundred of these do not exceed thirty members each; and more than one half of *these* do not report over twenty members. Now, nearly one half of the churches with twenty members or less are vacant, and *these* vacancies amount to twenty-nine

per cent of the whole number of vacancies in all our 3,600 churches. Or, looking at the facts in a different aspect, we find that while the *churches* of from one to thirty members constitute only about one fifth of the whole number of the churches, the *vacancies* in these churches amount to nearly one half of the whole number of vacancies. The churches of less than fifty members are about equal in number to those which exceed one hundred members; but the vacant pulpits in these churches of fifty or less members amount to sixty per cent of the whole number of vacant pulpits, and in churches exceeding one hundred members to only nineteen per cent. We have quite a number of churches much smaller than any of these; but we have not been able to analyze their relation, as a separate class, to vacancies. In Dr. Dexter's new historic work, we are told that "the principal authorities were of the opinion that seven was the least number who could constitute a church." One hundred and ten of our churches report an average membership of less than seven; one third of them of not more than five; while there are six churches which report, including absentees, only one member each. When we reflect on what such facts as these must signify about maintaining a pastorate, it is not strange that these churches, and very many others of the 1,300 which have only from one to fifty members, should show such a large proportion of the five hundred and seventy-five vacant pulpits recorded in our statistics!

If we turn to the consideration of the *length* of the recorded terms of pastoral service still in continuance, these results are verified from that point of view. The number of churches of from one to thirty members is about equal to that of churches having between one hundred and two hundred members; but only seven of the former record pastoral service now continuing over five years, against twenty-seven of the latter, while more than twice as many of the former class report either vacant pulpits or pastoral service of one year or less, as of the latter. We have nearly three hundred pastorates now continued for ten years or more, and seventy of these pastorates are in churches exceeding one hundred members, while only eighteen of them are in that equal number of churches which report fifty members or less. In this same class of churches having fifty members or less are found nearly one half of all the pastorates in the denomination which have begun within one year. These facts point in precisely the same direction with our reports from correspondents; viz., that the leading cause of fluctuating and intermittent pastorates is found in the smallness and consequent weak-

ness of that one fifth of the churches which have less than thirty members, and of that one third of less than fifty members, but also containing more than one half of all the vacant pulpits in the denomination. The same evil exists to the same extent and from the same cause in every other denomination. One community, a village of about 1,000 inhabitants, is a specimen of hundreds. In this village not more than two thirds of the people are in any sort of co-operation with the churches, even to the degree of an occasional attendance; yet there are ten distinct church organizations, a large share of them chronically and necessarily pastorless. "We know," says Dr. Sturtevant, "that villages and towns can be counted by hundreds in which from four to six Protestant sects are maintaining a sickly and feeble existence, scarcely able by the utmost possible effort and self-denial to support themselves from year to year, without any efficiency or aggressive power, where, but for our multiplication of sects, one church of Christ would be sustained and exert its mighty influence over the whole community." The problem of pastorless churches everywhere would have its main difficulty removed if a system were generally adopted which would "exalt that which is more above that which is less important, and by the simplicity of its organization facilitate, in communities where the population is limited, the union of all true believers in one Christian church, and thus put an end to that division of such communities into several weak and jealous societies holding the same common faith, which is a sin against the unity of the body of Christ, and at once the shame and scandal of Christendom." The significance of this group of facts, so far as the work of this committee is concerned, lies in the degree to which the true proportion of causes of vacancies is brought to light. If this cause plays a *more* important part in making pulpit vacancies than has usually been supposed, then the churches which are strong enough to maintain permanent pastorates are really doing so to an extent for which they have not commonly received due credit. It is the conviction of some of the best informed among our correspondents that such is the case. We have received elaborate computations made to establish the position that the average length of pastorates is much greater than has been imagined. In one State it is said to range as high as seven years.

Strong emphasis is given in our correspondence to the malign influence of parish organizations, so related to the church that its affairs are largely administered by persons who are not its members.

It is clear that this is the underlying cause of many disruptions

not ostensibly from it. When the prerogatives of the church have been surrendered to those who are not its members, or usurped by them, it is not to be expected that a pastorate can be so well maintained or a vacant pulpit so soon or well filled as if the church held its most important functions in its own hands.

Nearly three hundred cases of disruption are reported to us from the unreasonable demands in many congregations for extraordinary popular gifts in the minister, the judgment of his work by a totally impracticable standard, the reliance on him to keep up a high pressure of public interest and fill the pews. Sometimes this desire takes the form of a voracious appetite for the consumption of young ministers. Often it breeds discontent from a mere liking for change, the love of novelty, or the theory that the dissolution of the pastorate is a cure-all for every ill which may afflict the church. The careless engagement of men without proper credentials, together with doctrinal aberrations towards laxity or excess of orthodoxy, are marked as having caused one hundred and twenty of the disruptions reported to us. The readiness of some ministers to make limited engagements without settlement by the church, and sometimes without even a call to its pastorate, their lack of intelligent and prayerful deliberation, the prejudice common in many churches against installation with its attendant investigations, and the lack of interest among many ministers (some of whom really seem to aim at a short pastorate) in preliminary arrangements looking towards permanency, furnish cases enough to increase this number on our list to two hundred and twenty-four. Many communications have been received emphasizing a custom prevalent in many churches of making pastoral contracts *by the year* as a continual cause of short and broken pastorates. This plan, so common in small and poor churches, tends strongly to make them smaller and poorer. Such a church is unwilling to assume in advance relations with the pastor which promise a given support for more than a year. If aid is received from the Home Missionary Society, it is pleaded that the missionary's commission is made out for a year only. The school-teacher is hired by the year, local civil appointments are made by the year, the Methodist itinerant is sent by the year; then why not engage the pastor of the church for the same term? A prejudice arises against installation by council as enforcing a permanence not warranted by the real facts in the case. So strong is this prejudice in some parts of the country that many a pastor feels that he can maintain a more permanent administration with his church

by resting on the general appreciation of his work than by calling in a council to pronounce him "installed" in his position. Sometimes the minister engages for a single year because he has his reasons for aiming only at a short pastorate, — an aim which, it was remarked, is always sure to hit its mark. He does not mean to take upon himself the responsibility of settled administration and work. He views his church only as a way station to something more acceptable. The church on its side is insensible to its gain from maintaining a permanent pastorate. Each vaguely believes in some unexplained advantage to result from *a change*. Thus, by making at the start a definite limit to the engagement, the preparation is complete for disruption at the end of the year, and it will be the exception when this preparation does not fulfil itself. The 1,033 pastorates on our statistical reports which look back to beginning within one year, are to a great degree the very ones which will give us the six hundred vacancies that will have to be chronicled in next year's statistics. Probably no *one* change in the method of making agreements between minister and church would do more to lessen the long list of one-year pastorates and vacancies than the change which should at least contemplate a more permanent engagement to the extent of making it indefinite. If the current prejudice against formal installations cannot be overcome — and in many instances it cannot — let the engagement continue at least until positive action, with due notice, on one side or the other, or by both parties, is taken for its termination. In this way great numbers of the churches and of the ministers would be rid of the temptation towards needless change of having a date fixed and announced in advance, at which separation must take place unless positive measures are taken to prevent it; and many churches and ministers would find themselves much better suited to each other after spending a few years together than during the first few strange months. The minister would take a far stronger interest in the congregation with which, at least so far as the form of agreement went, he might be associated for an indefinite time, and the church would yield a much more cordial support to the minister who was not, by the very terms of his engagement, a transient occupant of their pulpit. Indeed, the one-year contract is perhaps the *best* form in which a church and pastor can engage if they are seeking a plan which will do the utmost injury to the good standing, growth, and best interest generally of both parties.

The cases of disruption reported as caused by ministers are

nearly as many as those due to churches. Some of the wisest and best informed of our correspondents believe that ministers are more at fault in this matter than churches. Under the heads of general unfitness for the service of the Christian ministry in any church, defective moral constitution, temper, or administrative ability, absence of credentials, four hundred and sixteen cases of disruption are marked by our correspondents. If to these are added the instances given of disruptions on account of undue eagerness for large pay, place, and accommodations, unwillingness to live as the average of the people in respect to income and expenditure, lack of consecration to the work, impatience under ordinary and inevitable parish trials, laziness, neglect of pulpit preparations and pastoral duties, the number rises to nearly eight hundred. And various indications combine to induce the conviction that by far the largest share of these disruptions are continually occurring in the careers of a comparatively small number of ministers. With many thoughtful laymen, many pastors of long experience in the same associations, many home-missionary superintendents of wide observation and acquaintance, we believe that a certain class of ministers, but a few hundred in number, give more frequent occasion for the forced disruption of pastorates than all the rest of our 3,500 ministers together. There is hardly a district of home-missionary administration or a local conference or association wherein those conversant with the churches and the men cannot recall the names of some who hold a ministerial standing, and are migrating about among the churches, either looking for a pastorate or beginning a new one or ending one which is still new, and who, in the emphatic and unanimous judgment of all who know them, ought to be employing their gifts in other channels of usefulness than the Christian ministry. We by no means include in this class many ministers who may have been much out of active service or in short pastorates for reasons which do not reflect at all upon their character or competency; but only those who, for the reasons given above, do not serve the churches acceptably, and therefore so largely increase the number of our pastorless churches, and of churches which are forced to a frequent and (but for these causes) an unnecessary change of pastors.

A great number of miscellaneous causes are reported to us, not embraced in our general summary of 3,475 cases; but within this number are the following: There are two hundred and eighty-nine cases from bad and inefficient financial *management*, coupled with

a general avoidance of responsibility by leaving it entirely to a very few persons. There are fifty-seven disruptions charged to the account of unsuitable wives of ministers; but no effort seems to have been made to count those wrecks for which unsuitable wives in the congregation should be held responsible. Most of the ministers who have reported reasons for their *long* pastorates recognize with grateful emphasis the helpful influence of suitable and excellent wives. We have sixty-seven reckoned as due to disappointment and discouragement at not meeting the kind of success expected, and to the nervous strain and exhaustion arising from the demand for incessant intellectual production in competition with the multiplied sources of knowledge and mental excitement in these times; but of the efficiency of this last cause, some of our most observant correspondents are entirely sceptical, one of them declaring that he never knew a *genuine* case. Twenty-six cases are reported as occasioned by making ministerial service a work of mere mechanical routine, twenty-five from "candidating," forty from the want of some established means of communication between churches and ministers in need of each other, and fourteen from choir quarrels; twenty-four cases are mentioned as due to incompatibility. It may be nothing against a foot or a boot that they do not fit each other; but the two are more likely to keep prolonged company with each other when mutually adapted. These are the reports we have received. They are certainly suggestive of such thought and discussion as can but prove beneficial.

If any formal plan were to be adopted to meet the needs of our vacant churches and unemployed ministers, there is none within our knowledge more deserving of consideration than that which was proposed by Rev. A. H. Ross in an address at Andover Seminary, and afterwards substantially recommended by Dr. Crosby in a lecture at Yale Seminary. It is this: "Let each local conference of our churches appoint from its members a ministerial bureau, or committee of ministerial exchange, which shall serve as a channel of communication, counsel, and introduction between churchless ministers and pastorless churches, to which churches and ministers may apply for assistance, and which shall appear in our *Year Book* with name and address, and the conference the bureau or committee represents." Dr. Crosby says: "The church should have an organized system of bringing together unemployed ministers and vacant pulpits, by which, in a quiet way, consistent with the dignity of the church and the self-respect of ministers, churches would

be able to act intelligently, without the pernicious custom of candidating. A committee should be intrusted with the delicate matter, — a committee of experienced and judicious men, appointed by the chief ecclesiastic body of the district; and to this committee churches should apply, and on this committee ministers should rely." The sufficient objection to this plan seems to be that the churches will not apply to such a committee, and the ministers will not rely on it. This is a proven and acknowledged fact after seven years' trial of the plan. The General Presbyterian Assembly seven years ago formulated an elaborate plan of presbyterial and synodical committees of this sort, and organized a special bureau for the general superintendence of the work, "so that, as far as possible, every capable minister, asking for it, may have something to do, and every church may be supplied." The next year this Special Bureau complained that their notice inviting information from the synods had secured little or no return, and asked the General Assembly to renew its injunctions. A year later this neglect was again complained of as a reason why the efficiency of the bureau had been so small. Churches continued to seek and find ministers and ministers to engage churches without any preliminary reference to the machinery thus provided by the general denominational government; and there were as many vacant churches and unemployed ministers as ever. In 1878 the Special Bureau said: "But a single synod has reported to the Board during the year; which indicates either a happy condition of the presbyteries and synods, or considerable forgetfulness of this salutary way of relief adopted by the Assembly," which it again asked to renew its injunctions on this subject. But the renewal was again unheeded: neither pastorless churches nor unemployed ministers would generally make use of the committees; and in 1880, the General Assembly, despite this elaborate machinery, governmentally applied, received several overtures asking for "special action to remedy the great evil to the church arising from so many unemployed ministers, and yet so many vacant churches, pronounced the frequent dissolution of the pastoral relation 'a growing evil in our church,' and raised another committee to report some plan to alleviate or remove, if possible, these evils." This experiment seems to indicate that neither churches nor ministers can be brought by any new form of machinery to leave their concerns in other hands than their own. The committees are left idle while the parties transact their business for themselves. Plans for intrusting it to other hands have been and will remain mere plans on paper.

It may be permitted us to add in conclusion that the outlook is more cheering to us *after* these investigations and this correspondence than it seemed when the work began. The quick and general interest in the subject among both ministers and laymen seems to indicate that it is receiving, or beginning to receive, the attention it merits. The facts, unpleasant as they are, hardly justify the notion, so often taken for granted, that there has been of late a rapid increase in the number of pastorless churches, and that the last decade or two have witnessed an unfortunate and growing change in this respect. If we accept the statement, regularly repeated in our statistical minutes, that "most of the acting pastors are practically the same as pastors," the number of our pastorless churches has remained at nearly the same point relatively to the whole number of churches for more than twenty years. The average of vacant churches has been about .225 of the whole number. In 1857 it was a little less, in 1867 a little more, in 1877 a little less again, and in 1879 somewhat more. That the stated supply of our pulpits by pastors has so *nearly* kept pace with the growth of the churches, in this period of unparalleled migration in the country and of rapid increase in the number of new and frontier churches, will be a surprise to those who have not studied the facts. These facts are indeed alarming, but there are some signs that the churches are becoming more sensible of them. In this lies the hope of the future. In bringing the main facts to the knowledge of the churches lies the value of such inquiries and investigations as your committee have made, and of such conferences and discussions as have brought us here. The influence of facts, of thought, of discussion, is that on which we have staked our existence as associated churches. When it was brought to the notice of the General Presbyterian Assembly that there were over one thousand vacant churches within its jurisdiction, of which nearly six hundred had but twenty-five members each, and nearly two hundred had each only ten members or less, that governing body instructed its presbyteries "to consider whether some of these churches may not be consolidated advantageously to themselves without injury to the cause of religion." We have deliberately passed by the methods of centralized ecclesiastical government, and rested our future on our confidence in the advantage of taking counsel together. The force of our counsels among the churches will be precisely the force of reason that is in them. To bring the exact facts to light, to circulate the fullest information freely

among the churches, to incite general consideration and discussion in a constituency as intelligent and thoughtful as that of the Congregational churches, — this, we suppose, will insure the only remedy for such evils as we have been studying; and that remedy is such a change to a better mind in the churches as will make these evils impossible. It may seem but a lame and impotent conclusion to pass by the invention of new plans and additional machinery, and rest our hopes upon a free discussion here of the facts, and their diffusion for free discussion in the churches; but this, in the light of a large experience, is what Providence seems to point us to, and we believe that the high and unique advantage of such great national assemblies as this lies in their power to give direction to the attention and thought of the churches.

REPORT ON THE MONUMENT TO JOHN ROBINSON.

The committee appointed by the Council at Detroit to take measures for the erection in the city of Leyden, Holland, of a monument to the memory of John Robinson, beg leave to report that they have given considerable thought to the subject, and have corresponded with gentlemen in Leyden, and have ascertained, beyond a doubt, that it would be grateful to the authorities and citizens of that "fair and beautiful city" should such a monument be erected there; and that its guardianship may safely be intrusted to their friendship. It has further been made obvious that an important moral influence may be anticipated from the erection there of such a memorial.

The first impression of your committee favored the attempt at the raising of a sufficient sum to warrant the erection of a suitable statue by a competent artist, in the old Clerk Square, in front of the site of the house where the Pilgrim pastor taught and died; and on some conference with the Congregational Union of England and Wales, it was made probable that English descendants of those early Separatists who are our common spiritual fathers would gladly share with us the cost of such a monumental statue. The consideration, however, that as neither bust, portrait, nor even hint of his physical presence remains, such a statue must be purely ideal, determined the committee in doubt of the wisdom of that course, and led them to favor the simpler course of the preparation of a tablet, properly and fully sculptured and inscribed, upon the

inner walls of the cathedral of St. Peter, under whose pavement Robinson lies buried. They are deeply persuaded that such a tablet would not only be welcomed to those walls by the civic and ecclesiastical authorities, and would be sacredly guarded as a choice treasure of the city, but would be an admirable tribute to the great man whose name it would bear, and a memento and suggestion of truth and freedom in religion, where such influence is greatly and constantly to be desired. Your committee suppose that such a tablet, honorable to all concerned, could be prepared and put in place during the next three years for a sum not to exceed two thousand dollars; and that the money needed for that purpose can be raised.

The committee, therefore, respectfully ask this Council to appoint a committee to carry forward this work, in the hope that before another session the pious labor may be well accomplished.

Respectfully submitted for the committee,

HENRY M. DEXTER, *Chairman.*

REPORT UPON NON-RESIDENT CHURCH MEMBERS.

The National Council, in 1877, referred to the publishing committee some questions regarding non-resident church members.

This Council has added two persons to this committee, and the committee respectfully reports as follows: —

The New Testament idea of the local church is that of a local congregation of believers, able by residence to meet together for worship, sacraments, and discipline. A permanent residence in one city where there is a church, with nominal membership in a city far off, seems entirely abnormal. A church now should consist of residents, — with, of course, some exceptions; such exceptions as a case where the absent member does not find a church such as he can properly apply to, or where certain ties of a tender and affectionate nature may be indulged. Such exceptional cases are, of course, to be within the scope of church indulgence. But the church cannot be bound forever to continue its responsibility for persons over whom it cannot exercise watch and care.

In answer to the *first* specified class, viz., those who have been long regarded as non-residents, and concerning whose whereabouts the church has no knowledge: —

It is unfortunate that any church should allow such a lack of

loving oversight as to allow any considerable number to disappear without notice. It is a good and wise plan which some churches have, to print once a year, in an inexpensive form, a list of members and their respective residences, and lists of all changes of relation.

But when persons have disappeared, then — after the church shall have sought diligently to find the absent brother or sister — a common and good course is to place such names upon a separate list, cease enumerating them as members, but being able thus by a simple vote to replace the name on the common list, if occasion should enable it to be done.

On the *second* question, as to those who have requested and received letters of dismission, and yet as to whose connection with any other church the church has no knowledge : —

A person receiving a letter is still a member of the church voting the letter, until he is received by the church to which he is dismissed. It is a wise rule in many churches that a letter of dismissal holds good only if used within twelve months, and on such failure lapses of itself ; and such condition ought to be written or printed in the letter. It is also wise that a blank form of return certificate be appended to the letter, to be signed by the clerk of the church receiving the letter, and to be returned.

By such a method, properly administered, the trouble referred to will be avoided.

But if such cases do occur as mentioned in this request, then a letter of inquiry to the church to whom the letter is addressed will at once solve the difficulty.

As to the *third* specification, viz., those who have been for a long time absent and refuse to request letters of dismission : —

We suppose that the word " refuse " is not quite accurate ; perhaps " refuse or neglect " is meant.

The church has the right, we have seen, to relieve itself of the watch and care of persons who are not resident within its convenient territory. It can do this, not summarily, but, first, by a rule requiring such absentees to remove their connection in an orderly manner, or by special vote suggesting it in given cases. If any refuse to do so, it is competent for the church to take steps tending to the withdrawal of watch and care, on the ground that the non-resident does not fulfil his covenant obligation to worship with his church, and yet refuses to relieve himself and the church in an orderly way. The church should of course notify the brother of the time of hearing, and proceed as usual in such cases.

But it should be remembered that the object of church discipline is to *save*, not to cut off and get rid of. Pastoral and other care should be a loving, gentle, and faithful helpfulness. It is related of Cotton Mather that he kept a perfect list of the members of his church and of his congregation, and that he used, at regular times, to pray to God in behalf of each member in turn; calling his name aloud to the Lord who calleth his sheep by *name;* and with this asked God and himself, "What good can I do to this soul?" Great results were his constant reward. Had any one asked Cotton Mather how many were his church members, and how many resided in Boston; if the questioner had gone further and asked how many had confessed Christ before the world in the preceding twelve months, or had come from other parts to his fold, or how many had gone *to* other flocks, or from the church militant to the church triumphant; or how many children he had commended to him who took the Judean babes in his loving arms,—doubtless Cotton Mather would not have shuddered at a spectre of "statistics," for he had counted these souls upon his knees.

A. H. ROSS.
C. W. MERRILL.
H. M. DEXTER.
A. H. QUINT.
WM. H. MOORE.
EGBERT C. SMYTH.

MEMORIALS CONCERNING A CONFESSION OF FAITH.

To the National Council of Congregational Churches, from the Congregational Association of Ohio:

Presented at Wellington, May 12, 1880, *by Rev. James Brand, of Oberlin, chairman of committee appointed in* 1879, *referred to a special committee, Rev. S. Wolcott,* D. D., *chairman, reported back, and adopted as amended.*

We, the members of the Congregational Association of Ohio, believing that there is a wide-spread desire among the churches of our own and other States for a restatement of our Congregational symbol,—a formula that shall not be mainly a reaffirmation of former confessions, but that shall state in precise terms in our living tongue the doctrines which we hold to-day,—respectfully ask the National Council at its approaching session, to take this subject

into consideration, and provide for its discussion, with a view to the issuing of such recommendation on the subject as in the judgment of the Council shall seem advisable. Making such request, it seems incumbent upon us to state in a condensed form some of the reasons which impel us to this action.

We understand it to be historically indisputable that the Savoy Declaration of 1658, which is in all essential points identical with the Westminster Confession, is still the recognized doctrinal symbol of the Congregational churches of the United States. We are of course aware that the Council of 1865 adopted what is called the "Burial Hill declaration," and a superficial view of the case might suggest that nothing more is needed. But to those familiar with the facts, a very different conclusion will be reached. In the first place, the National Council of 1865 did not and did not claim to have set forth a full and adequate statement of the doctrines then held. Though many were in favor of such a step, the Council could not agree to give up the Savoy declaration as the authoritative standard "for substance of doctrine." The committee appointed by the Council to draft a new declaration reported in favor of merely a general summary, referring still to the old standards, as the exponents of the Congregational faith. Even that general statement, however, was rejected by the Council.

In the second place, the statement finally adopted on "Burial Hill" was equally or even more general, designed mainly to reaffirm the great fundamental truths on which as a denomination we hold fellowship with all other evangelical bodies. The Council distinctly and formally declared its adherence to the faith and order "embodied in the confessions and platforms which our synods of 1648 and 1680 set forth and reaffirmed."

It is certain, therefore, that this declaration was never intended to be a full and adequate doctrinal symbol of the denomination, by those wise men who adopted it. They refused to abandon the Savoy declaration as the final authority. It is equally certain, in our judgment, that the Burial Hill declaration, though faultless for the limited purpose for which it was designed, is so very general that it utterly fails to be of service as a practical guide, an educating influence, or a unifying power, in the Congregational body, which we believe to be a chief end of a formal confession of faith. Indeed, viewed from the standpoint of the great historical creeds, it is, as Dr. Bacon has said, made up of "rhetorical generalities," and was only a "felicitous escape from the mortification of not

being able to unite on a common confession of faith." While approving of the Burial Hill declaration for the purpose for which it was designed, we hold that the question of the expediency of a fresh and independent doctrinal statement is still undecided, and that the Savoy declaration is still our denominational symbol if we have one at all.

Now the question is, is it *expedient* for us to make a new declaration on the basis of the old — a formula adapted to the times in which we live, Scriptural, practical, large, robust, and health-giving, — or shall we still continue to gather reverently from time to time with tonics and trituration about the body of the old?

The ultimate aim of every creed, whether general or local, like that of every renewed life, should be wholly practical; viz., to adapt, enlarge, and perpetuate the efficiency of the whole gospel as a spiritualizing power. Can we do this as well in our age, by referring back constantly to the old symbols "for substance of doctrine," or by having practically no symbol at all, as by making a restatement of our own? Would there not be a real advantage in a declaration of faith that was up to the last results of Christian thought? We believe there would. The following are some of our reasons in brief: —

I. *There are certain generally recognized objections to the old.*

(*a.*) The very loose and merely nominal way in which we are compelled to hold the Savoy declaration has resulted in the dropping out of public knowledge of that symbol, while as yet there is nothing to take its place. A creed, to be of any value, is a statement of faith and practice for *public use*. But the old symbol is practically unknown.

(*b.*) Its modes of expression are outgrown by this generation. We cannot, therefore, reasonably expect to revive the knowledge of it among the people.

(*c.*) It is not adapted to meet the current errors of to-day. Like all other creeds that have served a good purpose, the Savoy declaration grew out of the circumstances of its own time. We learn from the preface that there was a strong tendency among the independent churches to cut loose from the historic faith, and a general unsettling of religious views even as to some of the most fundamental truths. These the declaration met and corrected. But the very characteristic which fitted it to serve a good purpose then, unfits it to do the same now. So far as a defence is concerned, it sustains the same relation to modern rationalism and materialism

that the walled towns of antiquity sustain to the modern siege guns.

(*d.*) The old symbol does not fairly represent the doctrinal views of the Congregational body of to-day. Its doctrine of "imputation," its statement of the doctrine of the "divine decrees," its view of "effectual calling," its statement about "elect infants," and its position as to a "limited atonement," are specimen points, where in the progress of theological thought there has been a manifest departure from the old symbol. The truth is that wherever the old-school and new-school views clash, the Savoy declaration is rigidly old-school; and yet probably nine out of every ten of the Congregational body are new-school men. This is an unnatural state of things, and out of such facts have probably sprung that doctrinal unrest and wide-spread discussion as to what the faith of the Congregational churches really is. It seems to us that the fact of this unsettled condition of theological thought is both a demand and a preparation for renewed attention to this theme. When speculative opinions are at the front, when Biblical truths are assailed, when human passions are being aroused in defence of both creedless liberalism and equally objectionable creed-bound exclusiveness, when the absorbing question of our time is as to what the fundamental doctrines of the evangelical system are, are we not justified by historical precedent in saying that the time is at hand for a full and fearless discussion of the expediency of a new declaration of faith? And if so, what body on the continent can so appropriately discuss it and bring it to the attention of the churches as the National Council?

II. We specify some of *the advantages which would seem to result* from a wise, comprehensive, Biblical, independent confession, which should be in all respects abreast of our own times.

(1.) It will give us a symbol couched in the phraseology of our own day instead of the antiquated and sometimes obsolete terms of two hundred years ago. The rhetorical attire of a confession of faith is doubtless of minor importance; and yet it is by no means unimportant when we remember that much of the restless controversy of our day turns upon mere words. The old phraseology not only prejudices many against the truth which it is intended to express, but often obscures the truth to modern minds, and thus removes the whole declaration from the masses of the people.

(2.) It would meet a very widely felt and expressed need of the laity of our churches. It has been well said that "the spread of

clear, intelligent, uniform precept and practice among the laity has not received due consideration in its relation to a new declaration of faith." Such a symbol would prepare the way for a general catechism which would be of immense value for the guidance of all Christian workers who have not the advantage of a regular theological education, and would be a blessing to every parent in the instruction of his children.

(3.) A new declaration would give us the advantage of definiteness and positiveness in our doctrinal position. It would let the world know just where we stand. As it is to-day, there is some doubt on that point. We have a symbol, but the symbol has not us, except "for the substance thereof." Some go so far as to question whether we have a symbol at all; and many others are in doubt, or pretend to be, as to what the Congregational body is really going to propagate in the world. All this results in a loss of power. Make the symbol of the body definite, positive, Biblical, honest, — one that we can stand by and know what we are defending, — take it out of the cerements of the past, and bring it near to the heart of the people, and you make it a power. Moreover, it will tend to promote a better spirit, by promoting a better understanding of us, on the part of our neighbors in other denominations.

(4.) Such a new symbol would help guard the doctrinal positions of the body against two opposite dangers from within itself, — against a drift toward no creed, and the drift toward nothing but a creed. The centrifugal and centripetal tendencies of the denomination to-day both need modification. There is a manifest tendency in some quarters to minify or utterly abolish creeds. The practical results of that will be to blot out the old distinction between evangelical and unevangelical views, and to indorse, denominationally, doctrines and views which working Christians cannot afford to indorse. On the other hand, the opposite tendency toward an *iron-clad creed system*, and an almost superstitious veneration for the exclusive formulas of the past, to the neglect of the living necessities of to-day, is equally to be avoided. The broad common-sense of the ages will always move forward on a line between such extremes.

(5.) Once more; the preparation of a new symbol would inevitably give a profound impulse to the study of Biblical theology. Such has been the fact in every creed-making age. Such is the fact to-day in connection with the revision of the English translation of

the Scriptures. The overhauling of old standards which is constantly going on in our theological schools would then take place among the people at large, and drive men back to fundamental principles. The agitation incident to such a movement, naturally leading to a large-minded and critical study of God's word, could not fail to emphasize in the public mind what greatly needs emphasis in our day, — *the importance of correct religious belief.*

Now, brethren and fathers, it is not claimed here that any human symbol is an absolute necessity to the existence of the church. It is only held to be a practical advantage to the cause of Christian progress. The great question with God's people is always the *practical* one. What is essential to the highest efficiency of God's word? What shall we preach? How best teach our children? How shall the laity be best equipped for service? What course is practically most efficient in sustaining and emphasizing those mighty motives of hope and fear which God urges upon men, to turn them from sin? Everything must gravitate toward that supreme inquiry at last.

A true copy. Attest:

J. G. FRASER,
Register Congregational Association of Ohio.

To the National Council of Congregational Churches to be convened at St. Louis, November 11, 1880:

The Central South Conference, in session at Memphis, Tenn., November 4, desires hereby to second the overture of the Congregational Association of Ohio, and of the other bodies asking the National Council to take such action as may seem advisable to secure a restatement of our Congregational symbol, — a formula that shall not be mainly a reaffirmation of former confessions, but that shall state in precise terms in our living tongue the doctrines which we hold to-day; and also to secure a fitting catechism of the same, for use among the youth of the present generation.

Indorsing without repeating the cogent reasoning of the Ohio Conference, we desire to present the additional argument which comes from the peculiar need of our mission work at the South. Our seventy-three churches there, with 5,000 members, are only the beginning of the work to which God has called us among the lowly poor who have so recently come forth from the house of bondage.

Our eight colleges, and our couple of scores of normal and high schools, with their more than 8,000 students, and these with their 150,000 pupils in primary schools where they teach, are rapidly preparing the material out of which churches of our faith and polity will be developed.

These children of nature, with their ready faith but rude culture, coming into the inheritance of this New Testament way of the churches, need the "sincere milk of the Word," — a declaration of doctrine that shall not be in the nomenclature nor in the philosophy of a past age, but in the language and after the spirit of our improved New England theology.

They need a form of sound words, such as that when they have once learned it, they will not need to be taught over again what it does not mean in spite of its phraseology.

As a duty of brotherly love and of honest recompense, we owe them the best things we have to give in the way of the freshest and ripest statement of the ideas and doctrines which have leavened the East and the West, and are now setting the South in ferment.

A. K. SPENCE, *Moderator.*
GEORGE W. MOORE, *Secretary of Conference.*

To the National Council of the Congregational Churches of the United States:

The General Congregational Conference of Minnesota respectfully requests the National Council of Congregational Churches to be held in St. Louis, Nov. 11, 1880, to take such measures as will secure a declaration of faith common to our Congregational churches.

We believe that the indorsement of the Savoy creed by the Council of 1865 was too unqualified; and that as a denomination we apparently stand committed to certain statements in that creed which we do not believe, and to other ambiguous statements which need to be carefully defined.

The declaration of the Council of 1865 is hallowed by association with Plymouth Rock and Burial Hill. Portions of it are being adopted as creeds for new churches. We show no disrepect to this declaration when we express the conviction that it is wholly unfitted to be the creed of the local church; and that it does not definitely express our belief to our sister churches and to the world.

In our own Commonwealth new churches are being rapidly formed; some adopt one creed, some another. These new churches would be favorably disposed towards a creed framed by the National Council. It seems to us that the times are favorable for the formation of a new symbol.

There is doctrinal unrest. Good men are examining the foundations of our faith. The creeds of atheism, infidelity, and agnosticism were never more widely promulgated than to-day. The evangelical creed was never more plausibly caricatured than to-day. If our churches, through the National Council, can have grace given to them to make a testifying statement of their belief in the old doctrines, and again so define these doctrines in modern phraseology that the world shall know exactly what we believe, their action will stimulate thought and will promote discussion, the outcome of which will be favorable to evangelical truth.

While such a symbol of doctrine would have no binding force upon our churches, — possessing, according to our Congregational polity, simply the force of its reasonableness and its conformity to the Holy Scriptures, — we believe it would be favorably received by that large body of men, women, and children who love the church, and look to her teachings for their conception of truth.

Believing that while there are different philosophies of doctrine, the great body of our churches hold the simple doctrines of the Bible in their integrity, and that therefore a new symbol can be formed which may be generally approved, we submit our *overture*, and will pray that God will preserve the churches of our Puritan faith and order firm in their allegiance to the doctrines of the cross.

J. H. MORLEY,
HORACE GOODHUE,
Committee.

Attest: L. W. CHANEY, *Moderator.*

J. L. FONDA,
Scribe of Conference.

MEMORIAL FROM DAKOTA IN REFERENCE TO INDIAN AFFAIRS.

SISSITON AGENCY, D. T., Sept. 20, 1880.

TO THE CONGREGATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF DAKOTA TERRITORY:

Dear Brethren, — As our companions in tribulation and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, we call on you to help us in our emergency. By the unjust and unconstitutional restrictions of the government, the gospel of Christ has no longer free course among our Indian tribes.

We therefore would ask you to approve and forward the enclosed memorial to the National Council, and instruct our delegates to urge action on the same.

Yours for our common work,

ALFRED L. RIGGS.
T. L. RIGGS.
C. L. HALL.
S. R. RIGGS.

MEMORIAL

OF THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES AND MINISTERS OF DAKOTA

TO THE

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF THE UNITED STATES IN THEIR FOURTH TRIENNIAL SESSION.

Brethren, — We would bear witness to you of the importance and the success attending missionary work among the North American Indians.

This we do from personal knowledge of this work as it has been carried on within the boundaries of our Territory. Here, and at an earlier day in Minnesota, the missionaries of our American Board have labored for forty-five years among the Dakotas, or Sioux, the largest Indian tribe on this continent. For many years their work was hard and slow; but now the fruit of their labor stands forth on every hand.

No small part of the Sioux nation is, through their instrumentality, now Christianized and civilized. They have reduced the language to writing, have published a dictionary that is a standard authority in Indian philology, have translated the Bible, and have created a literature. They have gathered native churches,

raised up a native ministry, and have in successful operation schools of primary and higher grades; and as proof of the reality and genuineness of the Christianization of this people, we find them in turn organizing a missionary society of their own, and sending out their missionaries to their heathen brethren.

A large part of the Dakota nation is yet uncivilized; but the influence of Christian missions has so affected the whole people that barriers of prejudice and superstition are broken down, and there is a general desire for Christian teachers.

Into this field the Episcopal missionaries have more recently come, building on foundations our missionaries had laid; and yet, with all this, the greater work of Christianizing this people remains for further labors. Who shall do it? Surely no body of laborers are better fitted to lead in this work than the original Dakota Mission, with its experience of near half a century, its scholarship, its schools, and its force of native assistants. Indeed, we may say that it is not only fitting that it should do so, but it is under Providential obligation to do this work, and has a historic right to the field.

But just here the United States government, acting through the Interior Department and Indian Bureau, steps in and says to our missionaries, "No! we have farmed out this Indian work, — a part to the Catholics, and a part to the Episcopalians, — and you have no place outside the agencies put under the oversight of your denomination," which in all this Dakota field is just one agency. By sufferance, however, the stations already planted at other agencies are allowed to remain, as at Santee Agency and Fort Sully.

This unrighteous, and as we believe unconstitutional restriction has arisen in this way: Ten years ago the government called for the aid of the religious denominations of the country, in the nomination of Indian agents and other employés at the agencies. It was also expected that the religious societies representing these denominations should have a moral oversight of their nominees; and the government quite generally put its educational work among the Indians into the charge of these societies. But as for creating any monopoly of missionary privileges at the several agencies, no such thing entered the original plan. If any such proposition had been made, it would have met with a most vigorous protest at the time from the American Board and from other missionary societies. However, within three years past a different ruling has been made in the Indian Bureau, by which a religious

monopoly is created on Indian reservations, making a certain church the established church at a particular place, all others being illegal. Two years ago this rule was put in force against the Roman Catholic missionaries, who attempted to establish a mission among Spotted Tail's people; upon which the American Board at its meeting at Milwaukee in 1878 entered its protest in behalf of religious liberty. And within the present year the Indian Bureau has under this same rule proceeded to break up an offshoot of our missionary work at Devil's Lake, which agency is under the charge of the Roman Catholics. The Native Missionary Society, organized by the churches of the Dakota Mission, have had a missionary at that point; he has had the favor of the people, and a number have believed in Christ through his labors. But the Indian Bureau orders that he be withdrawn; and when the officers of this Indian Missionary Society respectfully appealed to the honorable Secretary of the Interior, the ruling is affirmed in still more definite shape.

We therefore respectfully ask the National Council to give this case their consideration, as a serious infringement of the religious rights of the Indians, and an unrighteous curtailment of missionary liberty.

To meet this evil we suggest: —

I. That the National Council of Congregational Churches use its influence to bring to an end the arrangement by which the oversight of the several Indian agencies is given to certain religious denominations, since it has degenerated into a threatening union of church and state, working nothing but harm.

II. To appoint a committee to confer with the officers of government and with Congress upon this and other questions involved in the management of our Indian affairs, and that this committee be instructed to co-operate as far as may be practicable with a similar committee appointed by the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church.

The letter accompanying this memorial was received, and the Memorial adopted by the General Association of Dakota at its meeting held in Sioux Falls, D. T., Oct. 21–24, 1880.

Attest:

JOSEPH WARD,
Secretary General Association.

A NEW DECLARATION OF FAITH:

Is it desirable that a Statement be prepared of the Doctrinal Belief of our Churches in the Form of a Declaration of Faith?

BY REV. HIRAM MEAD, D. D., OBERLÍN, OHIO.

One might well hesitate to open the discussion of the question that has been assigned me, — a question upon which the opinion of the churches here represented is not well determined. It is like launching upon an open sea. But there is one source of comfort in the fact that I am not asked to guide any craft but my own, and if my course is not prosperous and safe I shall wreck no one but myself. Of course the way seems to me to be plain. I hope that it may not look otherwise to many of you.

It will aid us in this discussion if, at the outset, we note briefly the methods of declaring doctrinal beliefs which have generally obtained among Congregationalists.

With few exceptions, — notably that of the church in Salem, Mass., organized in 1629, — the earliest churches of New England had no formulated confessions of faith to be used in connection with the admission of members, though they generally had covenants. Candidates individually professed their faith before the church, either orally or in writing. "We hear them speak what they do believe," was Richard Mather's answer in 1639 to the inquiry which came from England, whether a "public profession of their faith concerning the Articles of Religion" was required. He added that a "platform of doctrine and discipline" might be "lawful and expedient in some cases," but that "it should not be imposed to the very letter."

But such confessions were found to be insufficient. For various reasons a general declaration was called for. Accordingly, in 1648, the elders and messengers of the churches assembled in synod at Cambridge set forth what has since been known as the Cambridge Platform of Doctrine and Discipline, its doctrinal part consisting of the Westminster Confession, the part that relates to discipline being framed anew. The term "Cambridge Platform" is now commonly applied only to the latter. The entire confession was "commended to the churches" as "worthy of their due consideration and acceptance"; but the formal adoption of it by each church was not expected, and so far as we know, it never was

thus adopted. It stood rather as a general statement of the faith and polity of the New England churches.

After this, creeds of various kinds began to be added to forms of admission. Some churches simply referred to the general declaration as in harmony with the belief of the church. The formula adopted by one church (New Ipswich, N. H.), at its organization in 1660, runs as follows: "We do now declare our serious and hearty belief in the Christian religion, as contained in the sacred Scriptures, the rule of faith and practice, and as it is usually embraced by the faithful in the churches of New England, which is summarily exhibited, for the substance of it, in their well-known Confession of Faith." This is a specimen out of many, and perhaps the majority. Other churches chose to embody their belief in original language; like the church in Northampton, *e. g.*, which, in 1668, formally adopted a "Profession of Faith," consisting of "forty-six Articles or Positions extracted from God's Holy Word by their Pastor." Consent to this creed was expected from "all adult persons that [should] be acknowledged regular and approved members thereof." From this time onward the churches gradually fell into the usage, now so universal, which combines the creed with the covenant in the form of admission.

But before this usage had become prevalent, the celebrated Reforming Synod met in Boston, and there, among other proceedings, deliberately and formally adopted the Savoy recension of the Westminster Confession. This Savoy Confession had been set forth by delegates from the Congregational churches of England, assembled (by permission of the Lord Protector) at the Savoy Palace in the Strand, London, in October, 1658. Thus it came about that the Westminster, the Cambridge, and the Savoy Confessions were in doctrine and form almost identical. And as there had been no appreciable change in the faith of Congregationalists, the elders and messengers of the Boston Synod saw no reason for the preparation of a new symbol, while they did see the advantage and propriety of adopting the revised Westminster Confession. "We have (in the main)," they say, "chosen to express ourselves in the words of those reverend assemblies, that so we might not only with one heart but with one mouth glorify God and our Lord Jesus Christ."

This was in 1680. The elders and messengers assembled here to-day, representing the churches that have come from the loins of

that ancient Congregationalism, are not so likely to glorify God by declaring their faith in the exact words of the Savoy Confession; but if, on this its two hundredth anniversary, we were to commemorate the event, could we well evade the inquiry whether in *any words* we are able, "with one heart and one mouth," to confess our common faith?

The Saybrook Synod, which in 1708 readopted the same doctrinal symbol, spoke only for the churches in Connecticut.[1]

Thus matters stood for a century or more, the Savoy Confession remaining as their general confession, while the churches tended more and more to the adoption of particular creeds, which were incorporated with the formula of admission. But with the present century new modes of fellowship have been introduced through conferences and associations of churches.[2]

These associations or conferences, which have now become so general, are variously organized, but one prevailing feature characterizes them; viz., church representation. There had been nothing like them in earlier times. In their organization, therefore, the churches were guided neither by tradition nor usage, but simply by fundamental principles and by common-sense. It is remarkable that, thus guided, these organizations have generally incorporated creeds with their constitutions (without protest or objection, so far as I know), and have made actual or implied acceptance of these, conditions of membership. At present there are very few churches that are not associated with both State and local associations. Thus it often happens that the church, which has first its own creed, through its connection with the local association "in some sort" accepts another, in connection with the State association another, and another still as a constituent of the National Council (which is

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[1] The Connecticut Association has carefully preserved it, republishing it in 1842 in connection with the Cambridge Platform, in a volume entitled "Congregational Order," edited by a committee of which Dr. Bacon was chairman. It was reprinted in the *Congregational Quarterly*, carefully collated with the Westminster Confession, in 1866. If, as has been said so frequently of late, Congregationalists are entirely ignorant of the contents of this Confession, they are certainly quite inexcusable.

[2] Ministerial associations, which date back to the seventeenth century and have exerted so great an influence over the churches, are, strictly speaking, private organizations destitute of any proper ecclesiastical functions, and are to be rigidly distinguished from those more recent organizations which are constituted by churches through delegates. By associations, in this paper, associations of *churches* are always meant.

an association like the others, only more comprehensive). Cotton Mather thought that of all Protestants, the Protestants of New England in his day "gave the most laudable occasion to be called by the Papists' epithet, Confessionists." We are certainly entitled to the same epithet, if it can be earned by multiplicity and variety of creeds.

But are these multifarious confessions harmonious? Have they any common basis? In the early days it was claimed that the creeds of the particular churches, "drawn up in their own form, were but so many derivations from, and explanations and conformations of, that confession which the Synod had voted for them all"; for, it was said, "many confessions may be formed from one and the same system of truth, as many little streams may flow from a single fountain." Have the little streams ever since been running from the same fountain, and have they all the same taste? The Confession of the Boston Council of 1865, and the doctrinal basis of this body adopted in 1871, must furnish our only answer. These are the only statements of the common faith which have been made since 1680 by representative national bodies. Whether they are adequate or not we shall consider in the course of our discussion.

Coming now to the question before us, Shall we have a new doctrinal statement? let us inquire, (1.) What is involved in it? (2.) What will be gained by it? or is it desirable?

I. First, then, what and how much is involved in a general declaration of faith? In what relation does it stand to the churches and the ministry?

In answering this we must keep in mind that fundamental principle of our polity which affirms (in the language of the constitution of this body) that "each church has an inalienable right to self-government and administration."

1. Notice that this principle gives each church exclusive control over its articles of belief. It may frame its own creed, or it may adopt one already framed. The cardinal point is that no creed, however fashioned, can in any way be made the creed of any church till that church has in some formal way freely adopted it. When adopted, the church may, at its option, embody it in its form of admission. The history of our churches has abundantly proved that this right of the church is well understood and universally exercised. There is little occasion for fear that it will ever be neglected or forgotten; specially so long as all our associations are so scrupulously careful to embody in their constitutions a distinct denial of their purpose or right to interfere with the internal affairs of the churches.

2. Out of this same right comes the liberty of the church to unite with others in any form of organization that does not interfere with or impair its autonomy. If the churches thus associated think it best to give their assent to a statement expressive of their doctrinal unity, this, too, is the privilege and right which severally belong to them. The motive and ground for such organizations lie in the principle of fellowship, which in Congregationalism is generally admitted to be as vital and formative as the right of self-government. Fellowship we regard as an obligation. But where there is obligation there must also be a right; and in this case the right is not only consistent with, but happily it comes out of, the right of self-government. If any church chooses to enter into association with other churches in order that it may better discharge its obligation to be in fellowship with them, who or what shall prevent it?

Now, strict Independency denies this right. By it a church is not allowed to exercise *formal* fellowship with other churches in any way, whether through councils or associations. And in thus trying to protect itself against the encroachments of ecclesiastical domination, an independent church surrenders the right to exercise fellowship. Congregationalism, on the other hand, while no less watchful over its right of self-control, claims the further right to share the privileges and reap the fruits of organized co-operation; thus asserting and maintaining a more complete autonomy. For autonomy, as I interpret it, means the right to go away from home sometimes, as well as to stay at home; to associate with one's neighbors, as well as to lock the door against them. And when, by quoting Dr. Emmons's famous dictum, "Associationism leads to Consociationism, and Consociationism to Presbyterianism, and Presbyterianism to Episcopacy, and Episcopacy to Roman Catholicism, which is an ultimate fact," or by some other terror, alarmists would frighten our free churches out of the exercise of their right to join these voluntary associations, thus "spying out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus that they may bring us into bondage" to a narrow and restrictive Independency, let us "give place to them by subjection, no not for an hour."

Now, there cannot be a formal association without a constitution that shall in some terms define membership. A Congregational association should admit to membership, by their representatives, only *Congregational* churches. Naturally it will adopt a platform of belief, as a partial indication of the character of the churches to which the hand of active fellowship is thus extended. This is the

right and privilege of associated churches. Each may say with what kind of churches it will co-operate; and when a score of them unite upon a common basis, their act is just as free as that of a separate church in the adoption of its own regulations. Thus churches have the *right* to associate only with those churches that manifest doctrinal agreement by accepting a common confession of faith.

But what is the character and standing of the unassociated church? Is it not beyond the pale of the denomination? Certainly not, if it be a regularly organized and recognized Congregational church. Because churches have generally chosen to unite with associations, the hasty inference may have been drawn that this is part of the process whereby a church is Congregationalized; whereas it must be a completely constituted Congregational church before it can present itself at the door of the association.

3. This brings us to the question whether, apart from their connection with associations, Congregationalists can in any way put forth or acknowledge a general declaration; and to the further question as to the relation of ministers and churches to it when made.

Here we must bear in mind the exact significance of the process by which fellowship between our churches is secured and maintained. In the regular organization of a church, a council, made up of delegates from surrounding churches, is present by invitation, (1) to see "whether in its broadest aspects it be advisable that a church be formed"; (2) to consider whether "this church when formed is prepared to stand on such a basis of faith and polity as should admit it to fellowship" (Dexter, "Congregationalism in Literature," p. 549). One part of its work is advice and assistance rendered to the new organization; another part is the admission of it into Congregational fellowship, or — if any one prefers so to state it — to advise Congregational churches to receive it to their fellowship. At all events, it is the right hand of fellowship that makes it a *Congregational* church.

Now, plainly, no council assembled for this purpose could intelligently and faithfully discharge its duty without examining the creed of this church, and deciding whether it is essentially harmonious with what Congregationalists generally believe to be Scriptural.

The ordination or installation of a minister involves the same necessity of deciding what constitutes Scriptural belief. "The or-

dination of a pastor in a given church is *not* (as the ordination of a deacon *is*) a matter which concerns only the internal affairs of that one church. . . . The neighboring churches have a right to know whether the proceedings of that church in the election and induction of its pastor are orderly, and whether there is fit evidence that the man whom it has chosen is duly qualified. . . . Such is the fitness, such is the necessity of an ecclesiastical council for the ordination of a pastor. The pastor thus ordained is publicly and formally *recognized* by the right hand of fellowship given in the name of the surrounding churches." (Dr. Bacon in the *Congregationalist*, November, 1863.)

"If there is to be any unity of the churches, there must be some agency by which the fellowship of the churches can be certified to the whole sisterhood of churches. The council is this agency. Though but few churches are represented in it, yet it makes careful scrutiny, and officially certifies the result. Its action is accepted by all; it acts for all, as 'a jury is the country.'" (Dr. Samuel Harris of Yale Theological Seminary, New Haven, *Christian Mirror*, 1864.)

These familiar doctrines respecting the functions of councils called in the interests of fellowship are repeated here, not for the purpose of reaffirming or confirming them, but to bring more clearly to view the necessity there is in Congregationalism of some common basis of agreement. For if there be no such basis that is determinable, a council called for the examination of a church or minister is barred from all intelligent action. "Its occupation is gone."

There is then — there must be — a consensus of faith; "a law of elective affinity," to use Dr. Bacon's language, "which determines the confederation of churches for ecclesiastical purposes."

Here let it be said, once for all, that by the "consensus" or "the common faith" is meant not such a statement as would be agreed to in all points by every one who professes to be a Congregationalist. A confession that should exclude everything that any one would doubt or deny would be exceedingly meagre, more remarkable for its lack of doctrinal truths than for its declaration of them. The consensus, rather, is comprehensive of those great truths which the best and profoundest Biblical scholars among us — those who are generally acknowledged to be such — find in God's Word.

Now, it was just this consensus, this understood agreement, that

the National Synod of 1865 attempted to express in its Burial Hill declaration. In what relation do our churches and ministers stand to this consensus? What have they to do with it, whether it be formulated or not?

This is the supreme question in this investigation. Its answer is implicitly involved in the statement we have just made of the principles and methods of Congregational fellowship, and is briefly this: *Every church and minister, when admitted to fellowship, must or should profess doctrinal views that are in harmony with the common faith of Congregational churches, and they hold essentially the same views so long as they can claim any right to the continuance of this fellowship.* In other words, so long as they can rightfully be called Congregationalists, they will continue to profess the common faith. This is scarcely less than axiomatic. Its denial involves absurdity.

But to give more definiteness to our conception, it may be noted: (1.) That Congregational churches and ministers, when received into fellowship, are allowed to profess their own faith in their own words. A church may frame a creed for itself, and may require its candidates for membership to assent to its very words, for a church has supreme control over its own organization; but above the church there is no body that possesses like ecclesiastical power. "Quod non est ecclesia, non potest exercere jurisdictionem Ecclesiasticam; Synodus non est ecclesia, ergo." (John Norton, quoted by Dr. Dexter, "Congregationalism as seen in its Literature," p. 518.) This syllogism, propounded by one of the divines who assisted in framing the Cambridge Platform of 1648, is as good Congregational logic to-day as it was then. The Cambridge Platform, with its confession of faith, was commended to the churches, but it was not and could not be *prescribed.* The Burial Hill Confession was not even formally commended to the churches, much less prescribed. It was a mere declaration of the common faith of Congregationalists as the members of the Boston Council understood it. A church, then, that is to be organized and recognized, does not accept or assent to a creed imposed or even recommended by the council; it rather chooses and presents its own formula of belief.

So, when a candidate for ordination is under examination, invariably he is allowed to declare his faith in his own way. If he choose, he may say that his faith is expressed by some published confession. The cardinal principle, never to be yielded, is that churches and ministers, when seeking recognition, may declare

their belief in whatever terms they choose. They are not to be asked to subscribe to any prescribed creed.

In this chiefly consists the liberty of Congregationalism. While Presbyterians must profess their faith in the exact words of the Westminster Confession, Congregationalists, on the other hand, may confess their common faith in terms which vary according to the varying apprehensions which different individuals will have of the same truth. The question put to the candidate for ordination by the presbytery is: "Do you sincerely receive and adopt the Confession of Faith of this church as containing the system of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures?"

The question asked by the Congregational council is: "What system of doctrine do *you* find taught in the Holy Scriptures?" In his answer he directly and purposely confesses his own faith.

(2.) This Congregational way of instituting fellowship is not only consistent with, but also specially promotive of, harmony with the common faith.

For the candidate for ordination will exhibit his theological views and tendencies more fully if he is allowed to express them in his own way. Let him be required to subscribe to the exact words of a creed, and he may honestly do it, — but he will signify thereby what? Only that his doctrinal views are in *essential* agreement with the creed. His views, as *he* would express them, are still unknown. So far as appears, his doctrinal perspective — his view of the connection and relative value of Scriptural truths — is precisely the same as that of each of a hundred other subscribers to the same formula. It may be well for his brethren to be assured that his views harmonize more or less closely with the creed. It is better for them to ascertain, by question and answer, just what his views are, that they may see for themselves wherein and how far they harmonize with the common faith.

And this is the advantage which the Congregational way has over that of other denominations that simply require of their clergy subscription to a creed. Among subscriptionists there is more apparent agreement, simply because individual differences are not elicited or expressed; but of real agreement there is likely to be far less: for always, true agreement comes from the free expression and comparison of diverse individual opinions, not from their suppression and concealment. Congregationalists are thought to be exceptionally open to the charge of great doctrinal laxity, because here and there among us an outspoken liberal throws out heretical views.

But there is a compensatory advantage in this liberty as compared with cautious concealment; for heresy, like the measles, is least dangerous when it has broken out.

(3.) It rests with the council to decide whether the faith of the applicant for fellowship, expressed thus in self-chosen terms, is harmonious with the common faith.

When the candidate for ordination is under examination, he is encouraged and expected to give free utterance to his views without reference to any standard. He may be oblivious of the doctrinal systems of others, while careful only to express his own. With such statement his duty ends. Upon the *council* the responsibility then devolves of determining whether his views are essentially harmonious with those held by the churches. If the decision is affirmative, they extend the hand of fellowship. The candidate is assured that while holding the belief he has professed (and no longer), he is entitled to the confidence of all who are "of like faith."

Hence the relation between ministers and churches to the common doctrinal basis is not that of direct assent, but of *adjudged agreement;* those who are called upon to pass judgment — that is, the council — being under *immediate and the most weighty obligation* to interpret this basis intelligently and consistently, and to enter into and remain in fellowship only with those who essentially agree with it.

It scarcely needs to be added, that in deciding the question of orthodoxy, Congregationalists always appeal to the Word of God. Their doctrinal basis is their understanding of the evangelical system that is therein taught. Moreover, they always stand ready to welcome any new light that "may break forth" from that Word, and to modify their statements accordingly. But when a single member of this great communion dissents from the generally received evangelical system, and appeals to the Bible, claiming continued recognition and confidence on the ground that his faith is, in his view, Biblical, he must bear in mind the necessity he is under of convincing the churches generally that in this case new light has really broken forth. For the right of appeal to the Bible belongs to the confederated churches, as well as to the individual church or minister; and if the two parties — the single church or minister on the one hand, and the denomination on the other — cannot be made to agree, of course they must separate.

Sixty years ago a large number of Congregational churches and

ministers appealed to the Bible in justification of their adoption of Unitarian views, and claimed their right to continued fellowship. But they failed to convince the other churches, which constituted the large majority, that they were right in their interpretation. The consequence was separation. Any like dissent and appeal to-day may be expected to lead to a similar result. For very good reasons the mountain is not likely to come to the prophet, however strong the prophet's conviction that it ought to come. In the hereditary faith of three thousand affiliated churches there is a solidity — a power of inertia — that no single mind, however gifted, can possibly disturb; certainly, so long as this faith is rooted and grounded in the Word of God.

Let me not be understood here to imply that single minds may not legitimately expect to contribute somewhat towards modifying and shaping the views of the denomination. This work must be done by individuals, and in it every one may bear a part From age to age Biblical scholarship, as represented by pastors and teachers, has wrought great changes in modes of stating theological doctrine. But the process has necessarily been slow, and it has always been along the line and within the limits of the great evangelical system of truth.

Having thus considered how much is involved in a general declaration in its relation to churches and ministers, we come next to consider the special question before us, viz.: —

II. Is it desirable that such a declaration be made?

1. There is a presumption in favor of it in the spirit and tendency of Congregationalism, as shown by its doctrinal history.

It certainly is no new or strange, much less an un-Congregational, thing to propose a restatement of our doctrinal belief. Three times within the first century of our history, large synods deliberately adopted and sent forth elaborate declarations of faith. During the following century and a half there was no apparent need of convoking a national synod for any purpose, and there was consequently no fit occasion for making another statement. And there was comparatively small demand for it, at least previous to the opening of the present century, for churches and ministerial associations everywhere adhered closely to the doctrines of the old confessions. These doctrines were embodied in the Westminster Shorter Catechism, and were inculcated and received both in the school and the church. For nearly two centuries at least the Catechism symbolized the Congregational faith.

But during the present century uniformity of belief has been greatly disturbed by the shock of theological controversy, and as the result, we have new and probably better modes of stating some of the cardinal doctrines. Creeds have become less distinctively Calvinistic and less uniform. Some of them still bear the marks of conflict. They were shaped and sharpened by contending theologians. The taste scheme and the exercise scheme, Tylerism and Taylorism, the New-Schoolism of Andover and the Old-Schoolism of Parsons Cooke and his *confrères*, all have left their impress, and the consequence has been diverse forms of doctrinal statement. But the essential unity of belief was not supposed to be disturbed; and when, sixteen years ago, fifty-four representative Congregationalists, coming from fifteen States, including all the New England States, met in New York to take into consideration the matter of a national Congregational convention, they voted to recommend as one topic, "the expediency of setting forth a declaration of the Christian faith, as held in common by the Congregational churches." It was to be the first truly national synod that had been gathered since 1680 (unless the Albany Convention, convened for a specific purpose, be entitled to such a designation), and to these eminent representative men it seemed to be a natural thing that a national synod should set forth some declaration of the common faith. Indeed, so easy and simple a matter was it, in their view, that only three men were designated to prepare the new symbol, and they had only a few months in which to do it; and the result, which was reconstructed by a committee of the council during its session, and afterwards hastily modified, was unanimously adopted by the council standing on Burial Hill. If it were well done when it was done, then *perhaps* it was well that it was done quickly.

Whether it was well done we shall next consider. But just here I am only calling attention to the fact that fifteen years ago, as in the early days, it was the instinctive tendency of Congregationalists, upon due occasion, to confess the common faith.

With us, doctrine is paramount to polity. Accordingly, the object of this National Council, as declared in the very first words of its constitution, is "to express and foster substantial unity in *doctrine* and polity," — doctrine having its legitimate primal place.

We have then a general declaration, now only fifteen years old. What need is there of another?

This brings us to an examination of the present symbolic position of Congregationalism, from which it may be made to appear that —

2. Our churches need to be relieved from the awkward and uncertain, not to say false relation in which they now stand to past declarations.

There is a singular diversity of opinion among us as to our interest in the old confessions. The majority no doubt suppose that during the present century, at least, the churches have had nothing whatever to do with them. As denominational confessions they are regarded as obsolete, even though they may have been authoritative in their day. Others would say that the churches never had any responsibility for them. On the other hand, Dr. Shedd, with the instinct and judgment of a church historian, and possibly with the bias of an intense Calvinism, observed in 1858 (*Bib. Sacra*, Vol. XV. p. 689), that "the action of the denomination at Cambridge and Boston and Saybrook has never been *repudiated;* that if Congregationalism has any corporate existence and any organic life by which it maintains its identity from generation to generation, it *is still committed* to the symbols that were then and there made public."

However that may be, it cannot be denied that the synod of 1865 had some degree of right to speak for the Congregationalism of to-day. Nor can it be denied that the body then convened, composed as it was of carefully chosen representatives of the churches in all parts of the land, was competent to make a declaration of the common faith. Nor, again, could the formalities of its adoption have been more felicitous and impressive. The Council, convened in Boston, had adjourned, June 21, to meet the next day in Plymouth; and there, in the midst of the most thrilling mementos of the earliest days, standing upon what has been called the "holiest spot on earth," solemnly gave their assent to the Burial Hill Confession, the eloquent opening words of which are these: "Standing upon the rock where the Pilgrims set foot upon these shores, upon the spot where they worshipped God, and among the graves of the early generations, we, elders and messengers of the Congregational churches of the United States, in National Council assembled, like them acknowledging no rule of faith but the Word of God, do now declare our adherence to the faith and order of the apostolic and primitive churches held by our fathers, and substantially as embodied in the confession and platform which our Synods of 1648 and 1680 set forth or reaffirmed."

Criticism is almost forestalled, both by the excellences of the declaration itself, and by the sublimity of the occasion on which it was given forth. Who of us would not have declared his adherence to the faith of the Pilgrims if he had been standing with the members of that Council, in sight of Plymouth Rock, and on the very spot where prayer and psalm went up from the hearts and lips of the sainted sires? At such a time, and in such a place, should we be disposed to scan critically the doctrines of the old confessions, which were only referred to, not repeated, specially if we were not familiar with the terms in which they were expressed?

"Wrap me in mediæval robes," says Prof. Park in his celebrated Convention Sermon; "place me under the wide-spreading arches of a cathedral; let the tide of melody float among the columns that branch out like the trees of the forest over my head; then bring to me a creed written in illuminated letters, its history redolent of venerable associations, its words fragrant with the devotion of my fathers, who lived and died familiar with them, its syllables all of solemn and goodly sound, and bid me cantilate its phrases to the inspired notes of minstrelsy, my eye in a fine frenzy rolling, — and I ask no question for conscience' sake. I am ready to believe what is placed before me. . . . Call not for my precise meaning — I have not viewed it in that light. I have not taken the creed so much as it has taken me and carried me away in my feelings to mingle with the piety of bygone generations." (Convention Sermon, p. 29. *Bib. Sacra*, Vol. VII. p. 553.)

The confessors on Burial Hill were placed beneath the "wide-spreading arch" of the open heaven. They heard the deep-toned music of the same swelling sea that rocked the lonely "Mayflower." The very air seemed "fragrant with the devotion of the fathers," and everything about them was "redolent of venerable associations." Under such circumstances, perhaps they were likewise "carried away in their feelings to mingle with the piety of bygone generations," and were, therefore, in no mood for inquiry "into the precise meaning" of the old confessions to which they gave their assent "in syllables of solemn and goodly sound."

But, the rhapsody being over, we may and we should calmly inquire into the precise meaning of the Burial Hill declaration. It stands in its place among the creeds of Christendom which Dr. Schaff has gathered in his voluminous compilation, and like each of the others it must be taken for exactly what it is worth. "A creed," says Prof. Park, again, "should be understood as it means

and mean what it says." The authors of this declaration must be presumed to have meant what they said, and not something else. What did they say? The opening words I have quoted, which declared their "adherence to the faith and order held by our fathers, and substantially as embodied in the confessions and platforms which our Synods of 1648 and 1680 set forth or reaffirmed." They next declare that "the experience of the nearly two and a half centuries only deepened their confidence in the faith and polity of their fathers," and add, "We bless God for the inheritance of these doctrines." Then follow several paragraphs showing what blessings have and may come to our country through these inherited Puritan principles, not the least being that "distinctive excellence of our Congregational system" which "facilitates the union of all true believers in one Christian church, . . . since Congregationalists can hold fellowship with all who acknowledge Christ." After this comes the well-expressed platform of common evangelical belief, which is thus introduced: "While *adhering to our peculiar faith* and order, we extend to all believers the hand of Christian fellowship upon the basis of those great fundamental truths in which all Christians should agree. With them we confess," etc.

Now in interpreting this declaration we must note, at the outset, that it gives distinct and emphatic assent to the confessions of 1648 and 1680. We do not overlook the word "substantially," which qualifies their assent. But "substantial" assent is all that has ever been accorded to full and elaborate creeds. Our Presbyterian brethren, even, only require that their confession of faith shall be "sincerely received and adopted as *containing the system* of doctrine taught in the Holy Scriptures." Without a syllable of qualification, except what is implied in the word "substantially," the Savoy recension of the Westminster Confession was solemnly reaffirmed and emphasized.

It would be unnecessary to make so obvious a comment on this document if its real import were not so frequently and singularly overlooked by those who have occasion to characterize it. During the year past an editorial in one of our religious newspapers argues that we do not need a new creed, because the "latest creed . . . adopted by the council in Boston . . . is a pretty fair statement of Christian faith." And then the article quotes only that part of the Burial Hill declaration which sets forth the great fundamental truths in which all Christians agree, upon the basis of which the hand of fellowship is offered, and leaves the uninformed reader to

infer that this was all there was in the Burial Hill confession. (*Christian Union*, Feb. 18, 1880.)

Very recently (*Independent*, Oct. 14, 1880) Dr. Bacon comes forward to give "careless readers" of the declaration of 1865 his commentary upon it; and after transcribing the same confession of the common faith, he tells us that this is "the only confession of faith in that document," (!) and adds, "perhaps this confession would not have passed through the Council had it not been deftly packed in a somewhat rhetorical discourse about the faith and order of the apostolic and primitive churches held by our fathers, and about adherence to that faith and order substantially as embodied in the confessions and platforms which our Synods of 1648 and 1680 set forth and reaffirmed." (!) And then he calls upon this Council "to extricate that confession from its padding and give it out as the doctrinal basis of the Congregational churches." Now, it *may* be that those fundamental truths in which all Christians should agree, as summarized so happily in the Burial Hill declaration, form a good Congregational creed, the only doctrinal basis our churches need. Every one has a right to his own opinion about that. But no one has any ground for saying or implying that the Council of 1865 put it forth as such. It will not do for any one who stood with uncovered head upon Burial Hill and declared his adherence in plain English to the old confessions, knowing very well what those confessions contained, to say now, fifteen years later, that this declaration was merely "rhetorical discourse *about* adherence to the faith and order substantially as embodied in those confessions." Let no man seek to relieve himself of his responsibility for a public confession of his faith on this wise; always excepting the case of one who may have made it while "wrapped in mediæval robes" and "placed under the wide-spreading arches of a cathedral," or of one who is willing to acknowledge that he cannot stand on Burial Hill without losing his head!

Is it not folly to attempt to dodge the plain meaning of the declaration of 1865 as expressed in its language? We may say what we please about its authority or our present responsibility for it; we may say, not without reason, that the divines who framed and presented it were apparently not anxious to secure a very *intelligent* affirmation of adherence to the Savoy Confession, or they would have expended a few dollars on printer's ink, and put copies of the same in the hands of the members of the Council, — some of whom, it is safe to say, did not know it by heart; we may "respectfully

deny" (if we choose) "that the Savoy Confession has any authority over, in, or among the Congregational churches on either side the Atlantic or in the islands of the sea" (*Independent*, Aug. 19, 1880); but let us not say or imply that the elders and messengers assembled in Boston in 1865 did not reaffirm it, for the very plain reason that they *did*.

But have we not a more recent declaration which supersedes that of 1865 in the doctrinal basis of this National Council?

We have already noted, incidentally, the distinction that should be made between a general declaration like that of the synods, earlier or later, and the doctrinal basis of an association of Congregational churches, State or National: a distinction which lies chiefly in the fact that the association, speaking only for the churches that belong to it, may, if it be thought best, make assent to its doctrinal basis a condition of membership; while the synod, professing to speak for all Congregational churches, sets forth a declaration of the common faith without asking or expecting from the churches any formal assent.

It is well known that some of our churches have never been represented in the National Council, and really have no connection with it. Those that are here represented have the privilege at any time of quietly withdrawing, and of thus relieving themselves from all responsibility for the constitution of the Council, including its statement of belief. This statement, then, neither supersedes nor sets aside the declaration of 1865. Still it may be admitted that if the large majority of our churches, as is now the case, choose to be represented in this body, then its doctrinal basis will serve as an *indication* of the common faith.

What, then, is the doctrinal basis of this Council? It will be remembered that in the draft of the constitution proposed by the preliminary committee, reference was made to the declaration of 1865 as a sufficient expression of the common faith. The adoption of this would have involved, first, affirmation of "adherence to the substance of the Savoy Confession"; secondly, a like affirmation of agreement with all believers "in certain fundamental truths." This recommendation was rejected, and then a committee, to whom the matter was referred, recommended the following brief statement: "They (the churches) agree in belief that the Holy Scriptures are the only sufficient and infallible rule of religious faith and practice; their interpretation thereof being in substantial accordance with the great doctrines of the Christian faith commonly called evangelical,

held in our churches from the earliest times and sufficiently set forth by former General Councils."

This, with very little discussion, was unanimously adopted; but the unanimity was unquestionably due to the fact that some in the Council understood that, like the declaration of 1865, it affirmed adherence to the uniform system of doctrine contained in the confessions of former councils, while others understood that nothing was affirmed except the doctrines commonly called "evangelical," — that is, those "in which all Christians should agree," which certainly are *embraced* in all the old confessions.

A statement that is so uncertain in its meaning can be *satisfactory* to nobody. It has been lately characterized as a "laboriously and carefully indefinite statement," "a muddle of talk," "a voice seeming to say much out of a cloud of dust, but actually saying as little as possible" (Dr. Bacon, *Independent*, Oct. 14, 1880). It is more just as well as more charitable to say that it was a compromise made to please two parties, and susceptible of two interpretations. This is sufficient condemnation; for a statement that is designedly or necessarily indefinite is worthless, specially in a creed. And yet this is the doctrinal basis of the only organization that has a right to represent American Congregationalism.

If asked, then, for an authorized statement of the common doctrinal belief of Congregationalism, we can do no better than to refer to the Burial Hill Confession. The Council of 1865 had as good a right to say what this modern Congregational belief is as any body that could be convened, and they did say it. What they said was that Congregationalists still hold, for substance of doctrine, to the Savoy recension of the Westminster Confession, while agreeing with all believers in certain fundamental truths. Is this a true and adequate statement of the faith of our churches? Could any representative assembly of Congregationalists, like this, honestly reaffirm it? If not, then why not disclaim it, or make some declaration which shall be a substitute for it? For while differing from Dr. Bacon's interpretation of the meaning of the Burial Hill declaration, we ought most heartily to coincide with him in the main intent of his articles, which comes out in these unmistakable terms: "What we want in a declaration of dogmatic belief is HONESTY." Let us have an *honest statement* or *none;* and, after it is made, let us also have an *honest* interpretation of it; for honesty is the better part of orthodoxy.

But in saying this, we are not to be understood as implying that previous reaffirmations of the old confessions have been disingenuous or insincere. They have generally been accompanied with the qualifications, "for the substance thereof," or "for substance of doctrine," or "substantially," which have been understood to cover a *quantum* more or less of exceptions and denials. The earliest precedent for this is found in the confession of the Cambridge Synod of 1648, which declares "full and free consent" to the Westminster Confession "for the substance thereof." Knowing, as we do, that the New England Puritans were thoroughly Calvinistic, and therefore in full doctrinal accord with the Westminster divines, we readily infer that the qualifying phrase in this case denotes only slight and quite unessential deviations from the strict sense of the confession; and that, too, so far as appears, only in the single section that treats of "Vocation" or "Effectual Calling," which the Cambridge divines are careful to say "called out some debate, but passed, on the ground that the term was capable of a larger or more strict sense or use." This explanatory statement is exceedingly valuable, both as indicating the carefulness of their action, and the very limited variation of meaning which was implied in the phrase, "for the substance thereof." The next notable use of the phrase occurs in the action of the Reforming Synod, in its session of 1679, concerning the Cambridge platform of discipline. The synod voted that it did "unanimously approve of the platform for the substance of it." Cotton Mather undertakes to explain the meaning of this phrase in this connection. "In four particulars," he says, "that the churches had deviated in their judgment and practice from the exact terms of the platform." (1.) The platform does not, except by implication, permit the pastor to administer the sacrament to another church, but officiation by the pastor of another church had come to be allowed while a church was without a pastor; with great care, however, so as not to interfere with the speedy settlement of a pastor. (2.) The platform makes the ruling elder necessary, "not to the being, but to the well-being" of a church. But, "through *penury* of men well qualified for the office," the churches were generally destitute of them. This the synod regretted, as likely to lead to maladministration of church government. (3.) The platform permitted lay ordination. But the opinion of the churches and ministers was against it, and when one occurred it was a matter of "discourse and wonder." (4.) The platform taught that there should be a

"personal and public profession" when joining the church. In practice, the examination of candidates rested mainly with the pastor. (Dexter, "Congregationalism in Literature," pp. 481–483.)

Such were the very slight deviations from the terms of the platform, which in this case was covered by the phrase, "for the substance of it," and such the strictness and care with which it was used by the fathers.

For a century and a half since, it has been the standard phrase by which Calvinists have qualified their assent to the old confessions and catechisms. But while the confessions have remained the same, the theological opinions of those who subscribed to them have been constantly changing their form, until at last all the marked and essential "improvements" in theology — statements for which New-School theologians have been contending for a century — are quietly wrapped up and hidden away in this same wondrously elastic phrase, "for substance of doctrine." "New England theology," Prof. Phelps declares (*Congregationalist*, Jan. 9, 1878), "may be honestly held in the terms of the Westminster Catechism." Perhaps so; but we are tempted to ask whether New England theology, *as* New England theology, can be expressed in the terms of Old-School Calvinism? The answer, we suppose, will be, "Yes, *substantially*"; from which the inference must be drawn that all that is *substantial* in New England theology can be stated in Old-School language!

Have we then made no "substantial" progress in all these years in our modes of stating theological truths? No theologian will admit this. It will be affirmed rather that, in *modes of statement*, essential "improvements" have been made which cannot be expressed by the old formulas. The new wine can no longer be contained in the old bottles. Have not the bottles burst already?

As a Congregational body, then, we cannot longer maintain self-respect without some decisive action looking towards one of these results: (1.) Formal renunciation of all past declarations, which will leave us where many wish we might be, without any formulated doctrinal consensus. (2.) Revision of the old declarations. (3.) A new statement. Which would be the better, revision or a new statement, is a question which need not here be discussed. It may safely be left with the commission, if there shall be one, that will be charged with the duty of formulating the common faith.

The real question before us is whether we shall have *any statement at all*. As we have seen, the entire tendency and spirit of

Congregationalism favor it, while the universal dissatisfaction with our present awkward doctrinal position seems almost to necessitate it.

3. We are further urged to it by the great need there is of something which shall give definiteness and a guiding influence to our real doctrinal consensus.

That there is a basis of doctrinal agreement among Congregational churches is admitted even by those who deny that we have or can have any formula that will adequately state it. All our associations of churches presuppose it, and most of them declare it in their creeds. Every council called in the interests of fellowship postulates it. The very idea of Congregationalism, as distinguished from Independency, involves it. There is a consensus, or else *there is no true fellowship*.

Further, those specially who are called upon to represent the churches in their various acts of communion are obliged to have some conception of the extent and content of this consensus. How can the members of a council anywhere intelligently and honestly welcome a church or a minister to the fellowship of the confederated churches, without recognizing the harmony between the doctrines held by such churches or ministers and the common faith of the Congregational body? and how can they recognize this harmony without some knowledge, or at least some idea, of what this common faith is?

Now, in the discharge of this weighty responsibility, great assistance will be rendered by the symbol. Let there be an authorized statement of the common faith that shall present distinctly the various doctrines of the evangelical system which Congregationalists find in the Word of God, and then the council can the more readily determine whether the views of the candidate are so far in harmony with them as to entitle him to Congregational recognition.

But to avoid misapprehension, let it be observed again that the symbol cannot be used as a standard; for as a standard, it must necessarily be presented to the candidate himself or to the church to be subscribed to, or in some way acknowledged. But this would be an utterly un-Congregational mode of testing orthodoxy. The candidate must be allowed to declare his belief in his own way, and the council must judge whether it be evangelical.

But though the symbol cannot be made a standard, it may be greatly useful to the council as a means of instruction and guidance. Supposing it to be a clear, compendious, and able state-

ment of the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, will it not help any student of it to a better understanding of these doctrines? Any elaborately prepared symbol, used somewhat as a text-book is used, may be made an instrument of prime value in both intellectual and religious training. Teachers like President Mark Hopkins have thus used the Westminster Catechism with the best results. For if published doctrinal treatises, like those of Edwards, Hodge, and Finney, may be used as helps in theological education, then why not also the joint work of a body of theologians like the divines of Westminster? In some way, certainly, those who are intrusted with the care of the churches should be well indoctrinated; so well indoctrinated, indeed, that they shall be able, as by a kind of instinct, to detect false and unscriptural views. Out of their own conviction and knowledge of the truth they ought to be able to "judge what is" doctrinally "right."

If they are themselves in sympathy with the common faith of the churches with which and for which they act, it will not be difficult to discern those who are entitled to the hand of fellowship. But how shall they know that their own views harmonize with this concensus? Partly through information gained in the schools; partly from treatises and current theological literature; still more from the free comparison of views in clubs and associations. But their conception of the evangelical system as held by the Congregational body is liable to be imperfect unless they can have also the instruction and guidance of an authorized symbol, — a symbol which takes little account of local and temporary issues, the mere waves of partisan agitation, but with deeper soundings determines the course of that great undercurrent of belief that has come down through the centuries.

Now, if any one fears that a formulated consensus, thus used, is likely to become *too* authoritative to suit the free genius of Congregationalism, let him be reminded that no one can possibly escape from the sway of this kind of authority. In every department of learning the scholar must consult and be guided by the works of those who are, by common consent, authorities. Freedom of investigation and opinion are not hindered, but rather facilitated, by reasonable deference to and dependence upon them. The same is true in theology. Great thinkers like Augustine, Calvin, and Edwards have always exercised authority, simply on account of the commanding ability and strength of their statements.

Now, just that deference which is always due to superior wisdom

should be accorded to the doctrinal symbol. The men who speak through it have a right to be heard. Their eminent fitness for Biblical investigation, and their opportunity as representative men of ascertaining and comparing the various theories and systems that prevail here and there, enable them to present conclusions that are authoritative, not in the sense that they may determine what any one *shall* believe, but that, speaking for themselves and others whom they represent, they may tell what *is* believed. The nature of this authority is well stated in the preface to the Boston Platform of 1865: "The testimony of this assembly concerning what is and what is not the Congregational polity cannot but have whatever authority belongs to the testimony of competent witnesses assembled in a great multitude, and well informed concerning the matter in question, representing all those Congregational churches of the United States of America which are in recognized fellowship and co-operation."

The declaration of the common faith should also be the "testimony of competent witnesses, well informed concerning the matter in question, and representing all those Congregational churches that are in recognized fellowship and co-operation." Such a declaration ought to have, and will have, not only an educating influence, but also a guiding authority, and thus will both indicate and foster doctrinal unity.

The above statement as to the "authority" of the Boston platform of polity is signed by representative Congregationalists, a committee appointed by the Council of 1865, with Dr. Bacon as chairman. Recently Dr. Bacon has said (*Independent*, Nov. 4, 1880) that a "confession of faith," however prepared, "will have no authority in or over the churches, for they are responsible directly to the Lord Jesus Christ." He might and doubtless would have added, if his attention had been called to it, that the Boston platform of polity has no authority in or over the churches for the same reason, and we should all assent. But in saying this we should *mean* that neither the confession nor the platform can be *imposed* upon the churches by any higher ecclesiastical jurisdiction, for there is none higher. They may or may not accept the statements of either, and yet, it is to be hoped, there is not a Congregational church in the land that would not be influenced by the testimony of the authors of the platform. Councils continually refer to it as authority, as indeed they often refer to Dexter and like authorities. They are not compelled to follow either one or the other; and yet

in nine cases out of ten, perhaps ninety-nine out of a hundred, they will defer to the authority of the best expounders of Congregational principles. Their exposition will be a "law to them in the sense in which 'Story on the Constitution' is a law to courts of justice." (Dr. Bacon, "Historical Address," Norwich, 1859, p. 15.) So a confession of faith, similarly prepared and commended, will be referred to by those who want light upon the matter as an authoritative statement of Congregational belief. Churches and ministers still have their "inalienable right" to pay no attention to it; but fortunately they have also the same inalienable right to heed it, to be instructed and guided by it, to be indoctrinated thus into a better and more harmonious understanding of the fundamental truths contained in the Word of God.

As Congregationalists, we have freely enough exercised our inalienable right to disagree. The churches have abundantly demonstrated their ability to manage church affairs in a way quite contrary to the judgment of our wisest and best men. The demonstration has been complete, and we have sacrificed not a little in numbers and strength in order to make it. Now let us show that we have just as good, just as inalienable a right to agree as to disagree; the right, that is, to pay reasonable deference to the judgment of wise teachers, to get what light we can from them upon that which we most of all need to understand, — the doctrines of the Bible. And "knowing our rights, let us dare to maintain them"; holding still to that grand old doctrine of the Savoy Confession (Chap. 21, Sect. 2): "God alone is Lord of the conscience, and hath left it free from the doctrines and commandments of men in anything contrary to His Word or not contained in it. . . . And the requiring of an implicit faith and an absolute and blind obedience is to destroy liberty of conscience and reason also."

4. In close connection with this need of definiteness in our conception of the general consensus, we may note the further need of a confession that shall exhibit that broader and fuller range of gospel truths that should be taught from the pulpit, as distinguished from the more limited confession to which young Christians should be required to assent on entering the church.

The want of a symbol would be less felt if our churches generally were likely to retain, or frame anew, more ample creeds, like those which are still in use in many of the New England churches; some of which exhibit the doctrines almost as carefully and comprehensively as the Savoy Confession. Such creeds no doubt need revision

and modification to make them more nearly accordant with the modified views of those who profess still to hold them; but, revised or unrevised, each of them is meant to be a well-balanced statement of the evangelical system. Such a creed might properly be retained as a symbol to indicate the doctrines held and taught by the church. But they have been unsuitably and unwisely used as tests of the faith of candidates for admission, — many of whom are but children, and others, through lack of teaching or through wrong teaching, are weak in the faith. "In the beginning it was not so." The Cambridge Platform tells us that "the weakest measure of faith is to be accepted in those that desire to be admitted into the church; because weak Christians if sincere have the substance of that faith, repentance, and holiness which is required in church members, and such have most need of the ordinances for their confirmation and growth in grace." (Chap. XII., Sect. 3.)

The early practice of the New England churches conformed to this wholesome principle. They sought evidence of sincere faith only when the candidate was examined, and for a long time required no assent to formulated articles. Gradually, as we have seen, our churches deflected from the old way, and after a time not only began to frame full doctrinal statements, which for the purposes of instruction are right and wholesome, but they made of them standards, assent to which was, and sometimes still is, the uniform condition of admission.

In the days of the Unitarian apostasy, as was natural, this condition was most rigidly insisted upon as a means of keeping those out of the churches who, if admitted, might after a time infect the churches with liberal views, and by their votes might help to carry the whole body over to Unitarianism. That some good in this direction may have resulted, very few would care to deny; but it has been far from being an unmixed good. Meantime the conviction is spreading, and is likely to become universal, that the ancient way was the better; that "the weakest measure of faith [should] be accepted," and that satisfactory evidence of piety alone should, *as a rule*, entitle any one to the fellowship and privileges of the church: for it is claimed, not unreasonably, that genuine Christian experience involves and evinces the essentials of an evangelical creed. The result is, large modifications of creeds to adapt them to the limited doctrinal comprehension of the youngest and weakest of those who have but just entered upon the Christian life; reducing them, indeed, to what Prof. Barrows calls a "jejune mini-

mum" (*Advance*, November, 1880, article on "Creeds"). Many churches have been organized with no doctrinal basis beyond that of the apostles' creed, or one equally brief, and like it suited to the act of public confession, because they wish to place no barrier in the way of receiving any true disciple of Christ.

Some may doubt the wisdom of this, but no one can doubt the right of a Congregational church to adopt a briefer, less intellectual, and a more devotional form of admission than those which many of the older churches have. Any church might have in addition to this — as things now are, it ought to have — a more ample and comprehensive creed as its testimony to the truth, and as defining the character of its doctrinal teaching.

Now, whether this be the better way need not be here discussed. I simply call attention to the actual principles and tendencies of the churches as regards creeds and forms of admission, and to the gradual and unconscious drift which it indicates; a drift away from all manifestation of doctrinal unity.

What is the remedy for this unhealthy tendency of our churches to virtual creedlessness?

We have, perhaps, a partial remedy in the doctrinal basis of the associations, to which by implication churches who join them must give assent. But some associations have no confessions, and those that have them do not, and perhaps could not, wisely require the constituent churches to adopt them, in any formal way, as a condition of admission. It would look too much like "*imposing*" a creed, though really it would not be that at all. Besides, these conference creeds are various, and are liable to be essentially different. They do not fitly symbolize the one faith of our churches. What is wanted is some single declaration carefully and *representatively* prepared, — a declaration that may be honestly referred to as in all essential points the true doctrinal basis of American Congregationalism; not in order that like the other denominations we, too, may be able to point the world to *our* confession (though there would be no special harm in this), but that we may have one for our own use.

The members of our churches — specially those that have reduced their creeds to suit the infantile capacity of those who are weakest in the faith — need this full statement of evangelical doctrines for the purpose of instruction.

But it will be specially useful as an indication of the range of truths that the minister should be able and ready to preach.

"When a council is assembled," says the Boston Platform (Chap. V.), "for the ordination or recognition of a pastor, or for the ordination of a missionary or other minister at large, the candidate may reasonably be required to make a *more ample declaration* of his religious belief [*i. e.*, more ample than that required of the candidate for membership], holding forth to the church and council not only his personal faith in the Saviour of sinners, but also his doctrinal soundness as a preacher of the Word." Certainly the pastor ought to have a larger acquaintance with, and a firmer faith in, the great doctrines of Christianity than can be expected of those who come under his teaching. It has been suggested in some quarters, in the late discussion of this question, that the candidate for ordination ought to be accepted and recognized, if, in addition to intellectual gifts, he simply gives evidence that he is a genuine Christian. But the shallowness and absurdity of this view must be immediately apparent; for a man may be at *heart* loyal to duty and to the Master, while his *head* may be filled with the crudest and most pernicious notions. There are talented Christians in asylums for the insane, but we do not invite them into our pulpits. We do not doubt the piety of many who deny the divinity of Christ, but we *do* doubt their ability to preach the true gospel of the Son of God.

There is a system of truth, a large and comprehensive system, every article of which must be believed and taught by the preacher who would build up sound, symmetrical Christian character. It is what we call the "evangelical system," upon the maintenance of which now, as in the past, depend the purity and stability of the Christian church. Theologians of different schools or denominations may differ somewhat as to the range and contents of this system, but if they are all thoroughly convinced that there is but one way of salvation, every man of them will believe and *must* believe that certain truths are vital and essential.

The limits of that system it is not our province here to determine or discuss. But that there are such limits no one can doubt; and when they are drawn out we have the symbol.

5. Once more; the preparation of a new symbol is needed to secure the thorough reinvestigation of the Biblical foundation of certain doctrines, which, as hitherto held, are now boldly questioned.

So long as the membership of our churches are in agreement with traditional statements, there is certainly far less occasion for

revision or restatement; but when, as now, many thoughtful men begin to tread softly upon certain planks in the old platform because of their fear that they lack support, and when others are bold, on what they deem good grounds, to desert them, the time has come for candid and thorough re-examination. Whatever our individual views, whether we incline to the old or to some new way of stating these disputed doctrines, we ought to be equally desirous of bringing them afresh to the Biblical test. "To the law and to the testimony."

The doctrine of inspiration itself, many think, needs a better statement. Let the question be thoroughly canvassed, and let us have the best definition which in the present advanced stage of Biblical criticism it is possible to make. The doctrine of the Atonement is seriously questioned or greatly misunderstood. Is it not possible that reinvestigation and restatement, with the aid of the latest and best exegesis, would solve some difficulties and thus unify belief? Does the Bible, interpreted by all the light which investigation and reason can throw upon it, clearly teach the doctrine of remediless and endless punishment? These are vital questions. It is *not* a matter of indifference whether they are answered this way or that. The chief motive power of the gospel depends upon the right view of them.

Not for the purpose of re-establishing old views because they are old, or of justifying and confirming the new because they are new, should this reinvestigation be made; nor for the sake of gaining any partisan end. The question has recently been raised (as though it were really of grave importance) whether it is "in the interest of comprehension, or of division and exclusion, that a new symbol is called for." To this we are asked to give "a frank and clear answer" (Dr. Bacon in *Independent*, Nov. 4, 1880). Speaking for no one but myself, I would answer frankly, Neither one nor the other. The call for a new symbol — if there be *any* legitimate call for it — is in the interests of *truth*. If the truth, as God gives us to see it and state it in the declaration of our common faith, justifies a "more comprehensive union of believers," we will rejoice in it. If it divides and excludes, then, much as we may regret it, we cannot help it; for, like Paul, honest Christians "can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth." When we have found out what is the best statement of those Biblical doctrines which constitute the essence of the gospel of Christ, then we can do no otherwise than to stand by them, even to the absolute

withdrawal, if need be, from any who "would pervert the gospel of Christ," or "preach another gospel."

I state this view mildly. If we need a more positive and energetic statement, we may take the editorial language of a late number of the *Independent* (Oct. 28, 1880), which says: "The church must possess the right of casting out from its teaching force those that attack its own faith. On that all Christians should be agreed. Whatever it is, there is something that constitutes the doctrine as well as the practice of Christianity; something to which the church is bound. If a man reject the essential doctrines of Christianity, but persists for the sake of his bread and butter, or of his ambition, to remain in it instead of going out, as an honest man should, then he should be put out." We are willing that to this all the readers of the *Independent* should say Amen.

In this discussion I have aimed to touch upon points that, though important, have not hitherto received their full share of attention, and have passed by some of the strongest arguments for a new symbol, which have been already sufficiently urged.

That we need a confession stated in the phraseology of our own day, and that shall state more accurately than does the Savoy Confession the views now held, ought to be as evident as that we need a new revision of the Scriptures. It is a pithy observation of a wise theologian that "A creed should not be expressed in antiquated terms, lest men regard its spirit as likewise antiquated."

That a new symbol is needed in the interests of the laity I have distinctly implied, but not as strongly as the merits of the question demand.

That "it would give a profound impulse to the study of Biblical theology" is one of the very weightiest of considerations in its favor.

The reasons seem to be strong and convincing enough; but there is one opposing argument which, if valid, will set them all aside; viz., "It cannot be done." A better statement than those we now have — one more satisfactory to the ministry and churches — is not at all likely to be made. The answer to this objection, and the only answer that will either confirm it or refute it, is a *hearty and united attempt*. If it should fail, we have still the consolation that an attempt to do a great and worthy deed, even if it do not succeed, is incomparably better than excessive caution and inaction. For failure could do no more than make that more evident which the objection implies, — the lack among us of harmony upon the essentials of an evangelical faith. If this be the fact, the revelation of

it might be disheartening, but it would also be salutary; for the cause of truth always prospers best in the open field. It may be expedient under other ecclesiastical systems to make no attempt to secure real doctrinal agreement, provided the old orthodox articles are allowed to stand undisturbed, as being in some sense the historic faith of the church. But this does not and never can accord with the genius of Congregationalism, which demands a frank utterance of our present doctrinal opinions, and a ready acceptance of new light.

Some of the denominations are longing, we fear in vain, for a new and improved statement of their beliefs, or at least for a new consensus, which, as Dr. Schaff told the Pan-Presbyterians, three years ago, "would be a testimony of the living faith of the church, and a bond of union among the different branches of the reformed family." For the accomplishment of so desirable a result, the free genius and the untrammelled condition of Congregationalism are specially favorable. Our churches can do it if it can be done. We are not lacking in good exegetes or able theologians. We certainly do not lack enthusiastic interest in the great themes of Biblical theology. We lack no essential requisite for the task, unless it be confidence, — confidence in each other and confidence in God. Failure to institute some measures looking towards this result will seem to show either that we are not willing to confide in the wisdom of those who may be asked to prepare the declaration; or that we cannot, like our Puritan fathers, confide in the Congregational common-sense of our churches to make the right use of it when it is formed; or that, in our day, we cannot hope to have "the Spirit of truth to guide us into all truth."

How this may best be done it is not the province of this paper to suggest, any further than that it should be done — with due allowance of time — deliberately, carefully, and prayerfully.

CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS IN THE NEW WEST.

BY REV. FREDERICK A. NOBLE, D. D., OF CHICAGO, ILL.

Naturalists tell us that amidst the mountains in the island of Java there is a bowl-like excavation of about half a mile in circumference, and from thirty to forty feet in depth, which they call the "Poison Valley." The atmosphere of this basin or glen is constantly overloaded with the exhalations of carbonic-acid gas. Nothing can live in it. Human beings, the lower animals, fowls, droop and die almost as soon as they come within the fatal circle. It kills vegetation. As the cautious adventurer stands and looks in on the enclosure, he sees an arid waste of sand and stones on which no moss ever gathers, and scattered here and there the bleached skeletons of men and wild beasts and birds which have been betrayed beyond the line of safety. To breathe this foulness is certain death.

Here, amidst the mountain fastnesses of America, with dimensions outstripping the narrow bounds of that death-cavern in Java as much as this vast continent surpasses the island, *we have a* "Poison Valley." It is not vegetable life to which the air of this larger valley is destructive; nor is it animal life; nor is exposure to its influence altogether deadly in its effects on a certain sort of coarse thrift. Men inhale it, and they live still, and gains come to them in answer to their toils and their traffics; but every best thing within the sweep of it perishes. The home dies. The Christian church dies. The school dies. Patriotism dies. Morality dies. Aspiration dies. True sympathy dies. Everything that is fairest and sweetest in the social relation dies. What survives is tyranny and greed and lust.

Need anybody be told what is here meant? Since the shackles were melted from the limbs of the slave in the fierce heats of the war, and homes could be no longer invaded and letters no longer forbidden on the ground of color, there has been but one barbarism in the land atrocious enough to warrant the indictment just recited. One there surely is. Organized into a compact system, worked industriously and cunningly, maintained and advanced by superstition and ignorance and avarice and beastly passion and crime, the Mormonism of Utah is an immense laboratory of filth and craft and cruel wrong, and from it are all the time issuing poisonous currents and vapors, which bur-

den the air and sicken whatever is pure and sacred unto the death. It is a question whether to yield to a sense of shame or to give way to stormful indignation in presence of such a monstrous anomaly.

Nor does the volume of this evil energy diminish: it waxes. While we are gathering our facts and forming our plans, emissaries of Salt Lake by the score are abroad in this country and in Europe, pouring their enticing lies into credulous ears. An offence to the purity of every home, a travesty on religion, a blotch on the fair fame of the nation, a strange and almost unaccountable anachronism in the civilization of our nineteenth century, — Mormonism keeps right on, lifting up a defiant front, hurling its menaces right and left, increasing year by year in the breadth of territory it occupies, in the wealth it controls, in the numbers it sways, and growing stronger and stronger every day in the intrenchment it has in its own traditions and successes, and above all, in the policy of toleration which has been pursued toward it by the American people.

For thirty years, now, Utah has had a Territorial organization. The successive governors and secretaries are appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate of the United States. The judicial power is vested in a supreme court consisting of a chief justice and two associate justices, appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate of the United States. The Territory is entitled to a delegate in the House of Representatives. That Mormonism may be represented in its true character, and contempt flung in the face of the nation's best sentiment, care is taken that a practical polygamist shall be chosen. Such a man is a member of the lower house at Washington to-day. In these acts of our high officials, whether of acquiescence, or of half indorsement, or of protesting complicity, every citizen of the Republic is involved.

Yet for three decades Congress has been meeting and adjourning year after year; and courts of justice have been holding their sessions term after term, and nothing has come of it. No adequate laws are enacted. Those which are enacted are not adequately enforced. The Secretary of State is known to have sent out a mild circular to the European authorities, saying to them in substance: "Please do not allow your poor, ignorant people to be duped by these Mormon saints of ours, and sent over here to vex our administrations and embarrass our politics." And the answer is a despatch almost every week announcing: "More Mormons at Castle Garden." The iniquity grows. The "Poison Valley" lengthens and

widens and deepens, and the atmosphere of it becomes heavier and heavier with death.

But while this abomination of Mormonism is the most conspicuous and audacious and humiliating evil which confronts us in the "New West," it is by no means the only evil. As in the old days Mormonism was universally felt to be a fit twin for slavery, so now the Romanism which is found domiciled in the whole southern tier of our Territories is declared by all intelligent observers to be a fit twin to Mormonism. Indeed, there are not wanting those who affirm that the condition of things in New Mexico is even worse than in Utah. One man tells us in so many words that "going from Utah to New Mexico is like dropping out of daylight into darkness." The Mormons, as has been admitted, have the merits of industry and foresight and material thrift. Unable to serve God and Mammon at the same time, they have chosen Mammon, and this god of worldliness they have followed and obeyed with a commendable fidelity. The result is, as it was with the communities of Noyes at Oneida and Wallingford, a good outward showing. Not so here: in addition to their other immoralities and vices, the populations of New Mexico are chargeable with the whole brood of shortcomings of which indolence is mother. These people are lazy and shiftless. That means poverty; that means mental stupidity; that means habits of lying and theft; that means small intrigues, and all sorts of crookednesses. It is inevitable that darkness will enshroud such a community, and that they will be low down morally.

The worst of it is a ruling policy which helps the drift in this bad direction. If Mormonism, forgetting that the Mosaic economy simply tolerated the practice of a plurality of wives, goes to Constantinople, and adopts and imports the sickening excrescence of a Turkish harem, and calls it home, the Jesuitism of New Mexico goes to Rome, and adopts and imports principles of action which are the outcome of the worst Bourbonism in church and state with which Europe has ever been cursed. If Mormonism visits sections benighted, and whispers its temptations to the weak and lowly and wretched, Jesuitism embraces policies and follows methods whose direct tendencies are to make all weak and lowly and wretched. If Mormonism is bold, even to the point of defiance, and in some respects is open and aboveboard in its operations, it is not to be overlooked that Jesuitism excels in all the arts of the "still hunt," and like the "daughters of the sea" whose tiny skeletons grow into coral

reefs and islands, it is always at work, even though one hears no sound of building and sees no ripple on the surface. During all the years, wellnigh if not quite three hundred, that Romanism has had possession of that imperial tract of country of which the old city of Santa Fe is the centre, little else has been done by it than just to plot and manœuvre for the perpetuation of the Romish power. Selfish, subtle, determined, unscrupulous, this Jesuitical form of Romanism which holds New Mexico and large parts of adjacent regions in its grasp is the same foe to learning and liberty and progress, and to all the rational and moral forces which go to the making up of an advanced civilization, that it was when Pascal stripped away its pretensions, and uncovered its hideousness, and smote it till it reeled with his withering scorn. Nothing but ignorance and prejudice and a stagnant life can be looked for where this kind of faith dominates. To set things in motion is to threaten Romanism. To threaten Romanism is to arouse fierce opposition. Romanism has never yet yielded an inch of territory or an atom of power without a struggle. It never will. It will not in Germany. It will not in France. It will not in Italy and Austria and Spain. It will not in New York. It will not in New Mexico. Whoever, in the interest of intelligence and progress and a high-toned morality, comes into possession of regions in any measure under the control of Romanism, will have to conquer them.

Besides these evils, which are so patent and so appalling, there are still others in the New West which would fill all devout and patriotic souls with alarm were they not overshadowed by the colossal and arrogant iniquities just named. Take the Decalogue right down through, and it will be found that every commandment is sharply antagonized. Atheism, profanity, Sabbath-breaking, gross living, reckless disregard of property rights, reckless disregard of the sacredness of human life, and all those mischiefs which are sure to break out where moral and religious restraints are few, appear in their most pronounced types and in their most threatening attitudes, in these newly opened Territories. Let a man step into Utah, New Mexico, Arizona, Idaho, Wyoming, or even into many portions of the New West which have already been received into the Union in the capacity of sovereign States, and these wild opinions and lawless practices which are so out of keeping with all the best sentiments and traditions of the Republic, and so at war with all the conditions of order and thrift in a community, will at once challenge attention. It may well be doubted

whether there are any collections of people on the globe in which certain vices and crimes are so grimly realistic as they are in some of these extemporized towns to be found along the plains and mountain slopes of the broad West.

These are the facts. What is to be done? Many things, of course. The best laws possible to be enacted by our national Congress and by these Territorial legislatures are to be secured and enforced. The wisest and most trustworthy men who can be induced to accept the responsibilities of these positions are to be selected and sent out by the authorities at the seat of government, to discharge the high functions of governors and secretaries and judges. Courteous persuasions and the mightier force of public opinion are to be brought to bear on those who are pushing great industrial enterprises in these regions, mining schemes, railroads, town-building, manufacturing, — many of them so largely and quickly remunerative, — to lead them to devote some small share, at least, of their profits to the intellectual and spiritual welfare of the people among whom their wealth is garnered. Preachers, more and more of them, must be sent to hold forth the Word and to gather these people around the altar of the true and living God. But this is not all.

Over and above every other agency employed, and every other method of influence, there must be the Christian school.

Not the school simply, but the Christian school; the school in which the teacher, man or woman, stands forth as a practical illustration of what it is to have in one the mind of Christ; the school in which all the knowledge imparted gets somehow warmed and perfumed with the divine knowledge of the Son of Man; the school in which all the educating or drawing out of the mind is steadily toward the light which falls in on the soul from the face of the Father; the school in which every fact considered comes to have written on it, in letters which even the dullest pupil can read at length, the sacred name of God.

Very strange is it that such a factor as the school, taught in the interest of some truth to be subserved, or some far-reaching policy to be carried out, should ever have been overlooked, or even for a moment underestimated, by those who are specially charged with the sacred business of spreading abroad a knowledge of Christ, and of extending and establishing, in all most effective ways, the kingdom of Christ.

Men cannot always have Christian schools where they want them,

any more than they can have Christian homes, or Christian churches, or Christian Sabbaths, or Christian States; but, possible to be set in motion or not, the value and vital relation of them to all Christian interests, and the measureless potency that is in them, nobody in his senses will venture to question. Know we anything, indeed, of human appliance or influence, outside a mother's brooding love, through which so much certainty of direction can be given to thought, and so much staying quality be put into life, as the school, discreetly and faithfully and prayerfully managed?

In general, it may be said that the importance of securing the ear of the young is everywhere recognized. The decisive effect of early instruction on opinion and character is a fact settled and confirmed by ages of experience. Why do the disciples of Confucius and Buddha and Mahomet cling with such unyielding tenacity to the doctrines and precepts of their several systems? These ideas are instilled into them, to be as atoms in the blood, or as marrow in the bones, through the regular training they get in childhood. Why are some of our scientists doing their best to secularize education? Their own admission is, that if religion be taught to those in early years, it will make an impression and give a "theological bias" which it will be almost impossible to overcome in after life. Why do the Catholics fight the Protestant Bible in the schools; and why do they go still further, and fight the schools? They are of the children of this world who are wise in their day and generation. If they are to have men and women loyal to the Romish church, they know they must begin with the boys and girls, and thoroughly indoctrinate them in the dogma and ritual of the Romish church. In other words, they lay their hands on one of the simplest and most potential laws of human nature, and bend it to their service.

When Macaulay went to India as a member of the supreme council, he saw at once the strategic point was the school. If the school system of India could be reconstructed, and the extravagant and puerile myths with which the minds of the young had been crammed, century after century, could be relegated to the darkness out of which they had been born, and the English language, informed with English ideas, and alive in every clause and sentence of it with regenerating opinions, could be systematically taught, India would grow, and in time the thought and feeling and life of India would fall into accord with the dominant nation. He was wise.

Two hundred and fifty years before Macaulay was born, John

Knox had made the same discovery of the need and efficiency of the school. He pressed the kirk, at its own expense, to plant a school in every parish of Scotland. The dauntless men who had followed Knox in his terrific conflicts with Rome fell in with his views, and subsequently, with what result the world knows, schools, to be jointly supported by parishes and the parents of the children instructed, were everywhere established by law.

The name of Charlemagne is often on men's lips. It deserves to be. He is a large figure in history. Many and great things were done by him to set civilization forward. But the wisest step ever taken by the Great Charles, and the act of his life which had the most far-reaching and beneficent influence, was his sending and calling the Anglo-Saxon Alcuin to come and start schools in his realms. The different provinces over which he ruled had little in common, and they were constantly breaking out in fierce antagonism; he wanted to harmonize them, and to mould the people of France into a single homogeneous nation. He turned to the school and bent all his strength and skill to the education of the masses. The children of men just emancipated from bondage and the children of all the laboring classes were to be helped into knowledge, and the aid of Christian teachers was to be invoked to impart it. Knowledge, extensively diffused and built up on a religious basis, was what this wise emperor saw to be the supreme need of his time, and the hope of his country. He was far-seeing and courageous. It is because of such measures as these that Guizot is able to say of Charlemagne: "It was under his reign, and as it were under his hand, that the shock took place by which European society, turning right round, left the paths of destruction to enter those of creation."

Was I not right, just now, in saying it is very strange that anybody who would secure a great and permanent result of any kind should leave out the school as an instrument with which to work? But if it be strange in anybody, — pagan, scientist, patriot, — it is above measure astonishing that Congregationalists should fail in this sort of appreciation, and withhold their hands, even for an instant, from the establishing of schools — Christian schools — wherever they can.

What are the ideas which were fundamental — the bed-rock ideas — in early New England society? First of all, liberty: liberty to think, liberty to speak, liberty to act. But within this larger thought or sphere of liberty, what? These three: The Christian

home, the Christian church, the Christian school. Out of these were to come the Christian State. But marked at the outset was regard for the school. For more than two centuries and a half New England has been laying accent on the school. Hard pushed at times, and perhaps at the present, by some other religious bodies, in my judgment it is not too much to say that, on the whole, New England Congregationalists have never had an equal in the intelligent interest they have taken in pushing sound learning; the learning which has Christian nurture at its core. When the sons and daughters of the New England faith set their faces westward, as by instinct they take their schools with them; and to-day, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, all across these mighty States which are coming to be the birthplaces and fostering mothers of Presidents, one can trace the path of Congregationalism by the schools which have been planted along the way, — the theological schools, the colleges, the academies, the seminaries, — and in the public sentiment created in behalf of general and wholesome instruction.

When the time was ripe, and Congregationalists heard the cry, "Go ye into all the world," the same characteristic regard for the school appeared. Just as soon as he can, the missionary of the American Board avails himself of the advantages of the school. He invokes the aid of the school. He works through the instrumentality of the school. He multiplies his resources and extends his influence by means of the school. He lays broad and deep the foundations of the Christian religion in the Christian school. More than $95,000 were appropriated last year from the "Otis Fund" for the "enlargement" of "educational work" in our foreign fields.

How significant and suggestive that there is an educational work to be enlarged! Turning to the "Annual Survey," read at Lowell, we find that the Board has no less than twenty-nine "training theological schools and station classes" under its care; that it has thirty-seven "boarding-schools for girls"; and what is most significant and suggestive of all, that it has seven hundred and nine "common schools." Is there not great wealth of meaning in this?

When the time was ripe again, and Congregationalists heard the call to hurry to the rescue of the three despised races in our own borders, the school was almost the first thing thought of. It was seen at once that he who goes to the Chinaman with the Bible must carry also the primer. The nearest we have yet come to the solu-

tion of the Indian question is the school. The final solution of the Southern question will be found to lie largely in the successful operation of the school. It is not blind impulse, it is not simple expediency, which carries the American Missionary Association forward on this line; it is the genius of the New England faith asserting itself in the laying of habitual emphasis on the school. It is the "Congregational way"; a sort of logical necessity of this system.

May this instinctive output of interest in Christian education go a step further, or shall it be that what has come to be known technically as "home missions" shall be the one sphere where Congregationalists are to part company with schools, and say, "These are no concern of ours"? May the missionary to Japan and India and Persia and Turkey plant schools and be at liberty to draw on the treasury of the Board which is fed by the contributions of the churches to maintain them, and may the missionary to Virginia and South Carolina and Alabama and Louisiana and Texas plant schools and have the funds supplied him from missionary contributions of the churches to sustain them; while the missionary to Utah and New Mexico and Arizona and Idaho must be told that his business is simply to preach, and that he overleaps his mission and jeopardizes the resources he has to draw from, if he ventures to take anything more than a mere incidental interest in Christian schools? Accept the position who will, men who are true to the commanding traditions of New England, and are sensitively alive to the spirit and opportunities of the times, cannot accept it. To do so is at least to stand still, when the whole strain ought to be to go forward.

To go forward in our spiritual conquest of the New West by way of the Christian school is just now the most practicable of all methods. The Christian school pioneers the way, and it supplements the voice of gospel ministers.

There is very much less prejudice against the Christian teacher than there is against the Christian preacher. It is possible to locate and work a school at places where it would be utterly impossible to start a church. Mormonism and Jesuitism can excite mobs, and bring any amount of ecclesiastical machinery to bear on the man who has come among them for the sole purpose of proclaiming clean Protestant doctrines. The Protestant who is among them that he may gather their children about him, and instruct their young men and maidens, has allies in the very ranks of Mormonism

and Jesuitism; for the hearts of many of the mothers, and the better judgment of large numbers of the men, go along with the Christian teacher. In proof, the fact may be cited of academies already successfully established by the "New West Education Commission," in such centres of political and business influence as Salt Lake and Santa Fe and Las Vegas and Albuquerque and Trinidad, and not only established, but even awakening a good deal of enthusiasm; while in some of these places it has been almost impossible to secure any permanent foothold for churches. The same is true of the schools started at Farmington and Hooper and West Jordan. There is welcome for the Christian school, whereas there would be nothing but opposition to the Christian church. The Christian school, in other words, is a thing possible; and we can have it often when we can have nothing else.

Then, too, schools and academies quietly put in operation, and successfully carried on by Christian men and women, very soon conciliate prejudices, and open the way for Sabbath instruction in the Bible, and for the regular preaching of the gospel. Already is this the case both in Utah and New Mexico. Within the Mormon territory there are Sabbath schools, superintended by teachers under this commission, whose influence on the community is marked almost to the point of a moral revolution. These schools could have had no existence without the Christian day school to precede them. Within the territory dominated by Jesuit influence, there are churches that have had organization before, and a name to live, but very little life, which are now coming forward into power in virtue of the presence of the academies. As the Christian teaching wins its way, there will be more and more of these pleasant stories to tell.

Moreover, the kind of Christian work which is done in these academies and schools will aid in creating an atmosphere in which justice and truth and purity can thrive. Through the mental and moral quickening wrought by them there will come to be an element in society that can be counted on; a public opinion to which appeals in behalf of industry and sobriety and chastity and general uprightness can be made. Standards of thought and character and life will be elevated. Especially will the standard of learning be elevated. To men who have been even casual observers of what is possible to be done by teachers at all competent to their tasks, it will be sure to occur in no long time that there is a better use for public moneys which have been set apart for public schools than

appropriating them, as has sometimes been done in New Mexico, to instructors who can neither read nor write. Good schools will effectually cure all this.

Better, perhaps, than all else, through these academies and schools we shall be raising up, right there on the ground, a generation of men and women to stand for the truth, and to be wise and earnest co-workers with all who are trying to advance righteousness in the land. It is out of the question to think that these immense New West Territories can be saved by the few good men and women who can be sent to them from the East. The influences which generate intelligence and moral robustness must be supplied to them; and the institutions which have done so much to make Ohio and Illinois and Iowa and Wisconsin and Minnesota what they are must be set in motion and fostered in the midst of them. These services wisely and promptly rendered, the complete leavening of the whole New West with virtue and truth is only a matter of time.

Is it not evident that this work ought to be done by somebody; not talked about simply, but done? and that, if there are no existing organizations to do it, organizations for the purpose ought to be created and sustained?

If we advance a step and broaden the outlook, we shall discover two commanding motives, as yet hardly hinted at, for pushing every form of Christian work in the New West with all the energy of the faith which removes mountains.

One is the motive of love, — the same motive which swayed the Divine heart, when he gave us his only begotten Son to be the Christ. We owe it to these people to help them if we can, and to help them all we can. Blind as they are, and stubborn, and far away from God, and perverting the truth, and sinning as they do in just those ways to vex the souls of the righteous, these men and women in Utah and New Mexico, and all up and down the valleys and slopes of the mighty region which stretches from the eastern front of the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific, are still men and women. The Christian compassion which would take us away into any benighted section, which would lead us down into the dark lanes and by-ways of a great wicked city, which would constrain us to extend our hands helpfully to the weak and ignorant population of the South, which would conduct us across seas and continents to the pagan inhabitants of China and India and Japan, ought to be warm and potential enough to move us toward these Territories. By all the

pity we feel for souls bound in ignorance, and scarred with deception and cruelty and lust, I seem to hear these poor creatures, whose necks are under the ruthless heels of Mormon and Jesuit priests, pleading with us to come to their rescue. Wives and mothers, whose souls revolt from the bondage they are under, and children who are sensitive enough to blush with shame under the taunt that they are the offspring of polygamous marriage, stretch out their hands and say, "Can you not help?" If the victims of Mormonism and Jesuitism are ever delivered from their thraldom, it will have to be through the interposition of outside aid. They cannot break away themselves.

The other motive is one of self-interest. Our own welfare, whether as Christians or as patriots, is in solemn league and covenant with the welfare of these advancing Territories. Once, for four long weary months, we saw the chief magistracy of this great nation hanging in the balance, to be determined this way or that by a single ballot. In the recent election the contingency was not remote in which the whole decision might have turned on Nevada. Is it of no consequence to us what the moral and intellectual condition of Nevada may chance to be? It does not signify to a man that he lives in Massachusetts or Pennsylvania or Illinois; under our system of government the opinions and the character of men in the remotest county of Oregon or Florida are of vital concern to him. These Territories of the New West are growing in population and wealth and influence, growing with wonderful rapidity. One by one, and very soon, they will be States. In these sovereign capacities are they to be aids or hindrances to the realization of the nation's high possible destiny?

It is a great and sacred trust which is committed to us as the heirs of the Pilgrims and patriot fathers. To impede development and progress, or even to stand still and do nothing, is to be disloyal to country. Not to be quick to embrace every opportunity which opens, and to help in all possible ways, is to be disobedient to the heavenly vision.

REPORT ON MEMORIALS REGARDING THE NATIONAL COUNCIL.

The committee appointed to consider the memorials sent by several constituent bodies to this Council would respectfully report as follows: —

The Association of churches in New Jersey, reiterating its action of three years ago, has a second time forwarded to this body the following resolution: —

"*Resolved*, That while we believe there is a place in the Congregational polity for a national conference meeting statedly, solely as an expression of fellowship, we totally disapprove of national councils meeting statedly to give advice in denominational matters, as subversive of Congregationalism; and we express our strong conviction that such a body should be called only in grave emergencies, and by invitation from the State associations or conferences of Congregational churches."

The Association of churches in Oregon and Washington Territory, on the other hand, has memorialized this Council as follows: —

"*Resolved*, That this Association approve of the triennial meeting of the Congregational churches in National Council, as now held."

The Hudson River Association sends to this body the following declaration: —

"*Resolved*, That while we recognize the need of some national gathering for the purpose of fellowship and discussion of topics of general interest to Congregationalists, still we are of opinion that the National Council, as at present organized, is open to certain grave objections. Hence its functions should be more clearly defined so as to guard the liberty of the churches."

The General Association of New York communicates the following memorial: —

"Dear Brethren, we rejoice with you that it has pleased the great Head of the church so to bless and prosper his kingdom among us, and so to enlarge our work, that it has been deemed expedient to call into existence a stated gathering of the representatives of our churches to give expression to the unity of our fellowship, to conserve and promote that united fellowship, and to show forth our liberty in all things connected with our worship and work as churches individually dependent upon and loyal to our Lord Jesus Christ. And the better to promote that fellow-

ship and remove the possible danger of separation and division, we suggest to you the consideration of the propriety of making such amendments to the constitution of the National Council, in entire conformity with its essential spirit and purpose, as may be necessary to make it in the nature of a conference of the churches, devoting itself wholly to Christian communion, the diffusion of intelligence in regard to the churches of our faith and order, and to a discussion of practical and spiritual questions, without taking any votes not necessary to the maintenance of its own order and organization."

Your committee in commenting upon these several overtures, desire to express in doing so their profound respect and consideration for the constituent bodies from which they come, and for the individual churches and Christians composing these bodies. No feeling inconsistent with such consideration and respect should ever characterize the bearing of the National Council toward any memorial addressed to it by the least of the local organizations represented here. A fair and respectful attention is due to every one. May the time never come when it will be wanting! This committee and this Council, we are confident, are not to set the example of it.

An analysis of these several memorials resolves the declarations or suggestions made in them into three distinct points, viz. : —

1st. The objection of the Association of New Jersey to any "National Council meeting statedly to give advice in denominational matters, as subversive of Congregationalism," over against which we have the memorial of the churches of Oregon and Washington Territory approving the "triennial meeting of the National Council, . . . as now held."

2d. We have the judgment of the Hudson River Association that the National Council, "as at present organized, is open to certain grave objections," and that its "functions should be more clearly defined" in the interest of the churches' "liberty."

3d. We find the gist of the memorial for the Association of New York in a suggestion that this Council consider the expediency of making this body, in the strict, exegetical use of the word, a "conference" for the discussion of questions, "without taking any votes" expressive of the judgment of the Council upon them.

It is certainly a suggestive fact that these different memorials coming to this fourth triennial Council do not specify or indicate a single act on the part of this body, since its organization at Oberlin nine years ago, to which any exception is taken. So far as appears, the record of the Council in the past has been clear of any trespass.

We think, therefore, that the reiterated objection of the Association of New Jersey, that the stated meeting of the National Council is subversive of Congregationalism, is rebutted by the facts. In the language of the report on the overture from this State, adopted by the Council three years ago, we reaffirm that "we have no *advice* to give to the churches, in the historic sense which that word has in our communion, as the deliverance of a council called together by the churches asking for advice." That was a clear statement which the Council took of its own functions then. It holds the same view now; and it covers the whole case.

The Council is now, and most precisely, just what the Association of New Jersey expresses its desire for, — "a national conference meeting statedly"; nor are we at all able to see how, in the distinct absence of all legislative or judicial authority in this body, there can be any more danger in its stated periodicity than in that of the Association itself.

Nor, again, in respect to the memorial of the Hudson River Association, are we able to discover the necessity for the more clear definition of the "functions" of the Council, "so as to guard the liberty of the churches." The fundamental law of this body is itself a clear definition of the functions it undertakes, and an explicit affirmation of the churches' liberties. In terms as unmistakable as words can afford, the constitution of this Council tells what its purposes are, and declares that in the furtherance of these objects the "Scriptural right of each church to self-government and administration" shall be *maintained*. Definition clearer than that already given, security greater than that already established, we do not think language can formulate. Until at least some specific act, looking like forgetfulness of pledges already made, can be pointed out, we think a generous spirit should trust the Council to be true to its word.

The memorial from the New York General Association contemplates the self-imposition upon the Council of a limitation unknown in any of our State or local conferences; viz., abstinence from the opportunity of expression by vote of the opinion of the body upon any subject brought before it for consideration.

It is needless to remark upon the entire difference of character this one change, if adopted, would effect between this conference and all other conferences of our churches. In all these bodies the free expression of opinion in the form objected to by the New York Association is constantly employed. The Association employed it

in suggesting its abandonment by us. There would seem to have been no other way of getting the suggestion before us. Why it is inherently more dangerous in a national conference than in a State or county conference does not distinctly appear.

But it is obvious that not only would the change suggested effect a *difference* between this body and all others known to our order, but it would inevitably accomplish a change as well in the character of the topics and discussions of the body itself. There are, as your committee believe, many most important subjects which may properly come before the Council, concerning which an expressed opinion is precisely the important matter, and the mere discussion relatively of small account.

The alteration of usage involved in a denial of the common privilege of the silent indication of judgment by uplifted hand on matters presented, would at once deprive a very large majority of the Council of any opportunity to indicate an opinion at all; would offer a premium on multifarious speech as the only way of manifesting concern in the topics in debate; and would probably, in the view of many, make it hardly worth the while to incur the labor and expense of long journeys to hear papers they could easily read at home, and to listen to discussion in which not one in twenty could ever participate.

It is suggested, however, by some who advocate this abdication on the part of the Council of the universal privilege of utterance by vote rather than by voice, that the church congress of the Episcopal Church affords a successful example of the restriction desired. But it is very obvious to remark that the Episcopal Church is differenced from our Congregational churches in the very important particular that it has already established, apart from the church congresses recently instituted, other organizations expressive of its unity; other conventions where a vote means not opinion only, but power. That body needs therefore no congress for the expression of a unity which is already complete. It may well have one gathering where discussion only is allowed.

We, on the contrary, have no other national symbol of our union than the Council; no other general convention where we may indicate our agreement than this; no other way to collect that agreement than the old simple way of voting yea or nay to the topic before us.

In connection with this reference to the church congress of the Episcopal Church of this country, modelled after the church congresses of England, some recent utterances of the Bishop of Peter-

borough, speaking in his capacity as president of the congress at Leicester in September last, are very significant.

Far from regarding abstinence from voting as a valuable feature of the congress, the Bishop deplores it, and hopes it will end. He says: —

"These congresses not being truly and perfectly representative, not only are they an imperfect test of church feeling and opinion, but they are actually in danger of becoming an untrue test, inasmuch as a sense of fairness induces each committee to aim at giving to all schools in the church an equal representation in our debates, which, as all schools in the church are not equal in numbers or importance, must be so far a misleading representation. And inasmuch as congress is not, properly speaking, a deliberative assembly, — does not, that is to say, come to any decision directly upon any question discussed by it, — there is the obvious temptation to come at this decision indirectly, if not by votes, by voices; by the volume of sound which greets the appearance of some party leader, or the cheers which follow the utterance of some party watchword, as each party in turn tries thus to elicit what may appear in the papers as the 'feeling of the congress,' — forgetting that, after all, shouting proves nothing except the strength of the lungs of the shouters. In one word, the dangers of the church congresses are manifestly these, — that in numbers they may prove unwieldy, in choice of subjects limited, in discussion rhetorical and declamatory, in general result unpractical."

The truth is, American people and American Christians are educated to the habit of voting their mind. From school district to national election, from church meeting to State conference, this is their universal, good-natured, common-sense practice. Why should it be a dangerous practice here, and here alone? Cannot our brethren of New York trust this body to do safely what they always do themselves, — what they did in suggesting that we do so no more?

In conclusion, your committee feel constrained to express the opinion that while this Council is and ought ever to be ready to hear any advice or remonstrance from any church or association of churches in our body, yet a careful attention to its fundamental law, and a fair construction of its actions in the past, ought to relieve it from suspicions of its integrity or dread of its usurpation. And, indeed, the churches have canvassed the matter, and are generally satisfied. No ecclesiastical measure of recent times among

us has already been so generally considered, in State convention and county assembly, in church meeting and religious newspaper, as has the existence and utility of the National Council.

The work does not need to be done over. There is no necessity to awaken apprehension by an appeal to reconsider the fact or the methods of our being. The churches as a whole are content to try the experiment. The witness is in the body assembled here. The best way to allay any apprehension which may possibly exist is to keep on in an untroubled and untroubling way. Keep on! By its fruits the Council will be known. Let it live long enough to bear some.

We recommend the adoption of the following resolutions: —

Resolved, *first*, This Council has received with great respect the memorials of the Associations of New York, New Jersey, and of Oregon and Washington Territory also, and of the Hudson River; and after earnest consideration of the suggestions therein contained, feels constrained to express its conviction that the existence of a National Council, under the present constitution and rules, is not only a safe and useful bond of fellowship among our churches, and a means of great possible benefit to them, but it is an instrument vindicated in its employment and by the churches generally approved; and that it sees no cause to deny itself the simple method of expressing its judgment on all questions properly coming before it as a conference in that way of voting universally understood and employed in all our religious assemblies.

Resolved, *second*, This National Council, in the future as in the past, should welcome any suggestions which may promote its best efficiency; and we deem it cause of sincere congratulation that in this session, as in the last, there has been, even on ecclesiastical questions, substantial unanimity.

(Signed)

GEO. LEON WALKER,
C. L. GOODELL,
SAMUEL WOLCOTT,
CHAS. A. RICHARDSON,
} *Committee.*

REPORT UPON THE SECRETARY'S REPORT.

The committee to whom the report of the secretary was referred regard the only part of the report needing their attention as that part relating to the inconvenience and infelicity of retaining the distinction between *pastors* and *acting pastors*, and the possibility of some plan by which the acting pastorate may be recognized by neighboring churches, and this recognition take the place of a formal installation; and on the basis of this, report pastors and acting pastors indiscriminately as pastors.

The committee are unanimous in the opinion that it would be unwise to do anything to lessen respect for the pastorate. This has come down to us from the usages of the past; it is interwoven with the historical life and genius of Congregationalism, and in the pastorate in no small degree has been the hiding of its power. Nor is there any evidence that it is not now equally advantageous and adapted to the older churches and the communities moulded in Christian habits. The pastorate is as beneficial to the pastor, also, as it is germane to the life and power of Congregationalism. It gives him the moral help which comes from indorsement by neighboring churches, and puts him at once in position, without the necessity of slowly freeing himself from the suspicion of being an adventurer till he has made a character for himself by his life and record in the new field. Moreover, it enables him to plan and labor for years rather than on a twelvemonth leverage. In like manner it is an advantage to the church: it does not keep its thought all the while in a critical and testing mood, but enables it to put itself at once into its work with and around its pastor.

The committee lament the fact that so many of the churches have not yet come up to the pastorate proper; but an examination of the statistics shows that the period when the pastorate was the rule was before the Congregational churches had begun their aggressive missionary work, and the neglect of the pastorate has characterized the period of the rapid formation of new and feeble churches, and is relatively more confined to the immature and unstable communities. In proportion as the churches become strong, their objection to the pastorate, and the objection of the ministers to it, both generally become less, and we have settled pastors. In 1858, when the Congregational churches were principally confined to New England and the earliest born of her daughters in the West,

the proportion of the pastors to the whole ministry was 40.8 per cent; in 1880, since our churches have sprung up all over the prairies, mountains, and valleys of the country to the Pacific, it is 36.1 per cent; and the percentage is much greater in the older fields of Congregationalism than in the newer and more missionary. In Maine it is 43.3; in Massachusetts, 62.1; in Connecticut, 57.2; in Ohio, 47.1; in Illinois, 15.4; Iowa, 10.8; Missouri, 30; in Kansas, 33.7; and in California, 17.3 per cent.

The committee think it would be very unwise to modify our usage from its normal and healthful form to one that is only adapted to a state of things where the churches are feeble and immature. We had better hold on to the practice which has been entirely satisfactory in the older States, and will soon naturally be so in the newer.

While the pastorate, therefore, should be encouraged, it would not be best to do anything by which the distinction between it and the acting pastorate should be obliterated in our nomenclature. To publish both in our minutes as pastors would conceal an important distinction, and be calculated to cheapen the pastorate in the public mind.

As to the suggestion of the secretary that some plan might be devised by which acting pastors might be recognized by neighboring churches, and have this take the place of installation, the committee think that when the parties are not willing to have an indefinite or permanent settlement, something of this kind might be desirable. Neighboring churches in such cases might be invited to meet to advise or acknowledge the relation, and on its termination to certify to the public the standing of the respective parties. This, recognizing the relation for a limited time, while not so good as the pastorate proper, would put a minister in the confidence of the community and the Christian public, would protect the churches from the intrusion of unworthy men, would be in the interest of order, promote stability in ministerial service, would prepare the way for the regular pastorate, and soon give place to it. In that case we should have two kinds of pastorates: the limited pastorate — the pastorate for a limited period — and the pastorate for an unlimited period, not necessarily for life; and the distinction on our minutes might be the *pastorates* and the *limited pastorates*. Such a course as this the committee would recommend to the churches.

I. E. DWINELL. A. B. ROBBINS.
A. F. BEARD. J. E. ROY.

REPORT UPON THE PUBLISHING COMMITTEE'S REPORT.

The committee to whom was referred the report of the publishing committee, and also the question of a publication of the minutes of the Council, and a Year-Book for the next three years, have been embarrassed, first, by the burden of a present debt; and second, by a knowledge of the fact that the calls upon the churches for contributions to cover the expenses ordered by the last Council caused some irritation, and was felt by some of the churches to be burdensome, while it now appears that the amount of contributions asked for, had it been promptly paid, would have been insufficient to cover the expenses absolutely ordered by the Council. Under these circumstances, as the treasurer's report had been referred to a finance committee, a conference with that committee was invited and had, the result of which was an understanding that the finance committee should in a quiet way solicit subscriptions from members of Council or others for the payment of the debt, as a condition on which this committee would report some plan to cover such expenses as this Council would decide to create.

It must be apparent to all that this Council cannot be held without some cost. The publication of its minutes and Year-Book, however cheap the form or limited the number, will increase the cost, while a gratuitous distribution of eight thousand copies to ministers and churches will greatly increase it. If the Council desire the same amount of matter published in the minutes and Year-Book as was furnished by the committee during the last three years, with as wide a gratuitous distribution, they cannot expect to cheapen the cost, and to avoid debt must consent to a slightly increased assessment upon the churches. Moreover, as the minutes, to be of much value, should be published now, and the first Year-Book early in the coming year, the wants for the next year should be announced now and collected at the earliest possible day.

If on the other hand the Council would reduce the expenses and thus the burden of the churches, it will direct the provisional committee to make such an arrangement as is offered by the Congregational Publishing Society, by which that society will assume the responsibility of publishing both the minutes and Year-Book, if the Council will be at the cost of editorial labor, and purchase not less than two hundred copies of each, at a cost of seventy-five

cents and one dollar each, respectively. Of course the society would look for a further reimbursement by a sale of the books to the churches, but your committee fear that this policy would leave the mass of the ministers and churches unsupplied.

Your committee therefore recommend the Council either to instruct the publishing committee as to its wishes, or else leave the whole matter to their discretion; in either case giving authority to the provisional committee to call upon the churches for contributions not exceeding one and one half cents per member for the first year, and half that sum for the second and third years.

A. C. BARSTOW.
J. E. TWITCHELL.
LYMAN ABBOTT.
JOHN O. MEANS.
SIMEON GILBERT.
L. H. COBB.
GEO. H. ATKINSON.

REPORT UPON THE TREASURER'S REPORT.

To the National Congregational Council:

We, the undersigned, your committee to whom was referred the treasurer's account, in which it appears that Rev. Dr. H. M. Dexter as treasurer was in advance for moneys expended in carrying out the orders of previous Councils to a large amount, have to report, —

1. That in accordance with the wishes of many of the Council to them expressed, they have attempted in a quiet way to obtain pledges and subscriptions with view to liquidate the amount due Dr. Dexter; that such has been their success in this effort, they are encouraged to hope that this deficiency may be met within a very short time in this manner.

2. As part of this report, we submit[1] the accompanying book with pledges, while we recommend that it be placed in the hands of the treasurer-elect, to be collected and amounts applied to the liquidation of the indebtedness.

CHARLES BENEDICT.
A. B. LAWRENCE.

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[1] See page 204.

REPORT UPON THE MEMORIAL REGARDING THE INDIANS.

The committee to whom was referred the memorial of the General Association of Dakota, relative to missions among the Indians, respectfully report as follows: —

It appears from the memorial that by a ruling of the Indian Bureau the various religious denominations are compelled to confine their missionary operations among the Indians to the particular agencies to which they are assigned, and that no more than one denomination is assigned to any one agency. The result of such ruling, in the case of the American Board, is the compelled withdrawal of its missionaries from Devil's Lake, against the strong desire of the Indians whom they had instructed, to have them stay, and the paralysis of all further aggressive effort in the occupation of new fields among the Sioux: a poor reward for over half a century of labor and the expenditure of nearly a million and a half of dollars upon the Indians in general, and for the paying out since 1834 of upwards of $220,000 upon the religious education of the Dakotas in particular. The missionary operations of other denominations in regard to this people are suffering a like check; and notably from the Presbyterians and from the Episcopalians, vigorous protests have been entered.

Such a course manifestly is unjust in its bearings, both upon the indefeasible right of the denominations to proclaim their faiths anywhere within the boundaries of the Republic, and upon the natural and inalienable right of any man, however low down in the scale or in whatever condition he may be, to choose for himself as to what shall be the character and the source of his spiritual instruction. The assignment of one denomination to an agency, whether at the first it was designated to be exclusive or not, was a wrong step. It seems to have originated in a desire to prevent the complications of competition upon the same field, and to have been adopted as a peace policy. But, as it has been proven in this case, no policy is wise that contravenes eternal principles of right. Policy settles difficulties for a time only; right settles them forever. This policy was wrong, because it bartered away the rights of the denominations, and of those of whose spiritual prerogatives they should have been the champions.

In our opinion, the evil to be healed lies deeper than is suggested

in the memorial. In order to effect a permanent cure, the whole method of dealing by the government with the Indian must be changed. Now he is treated as an incapable. He is assumed to be a ward, and is kept in ward. He is in the anomalous condition of being neither citizen nor yet foreigner, neither bond nor yet free, neither man nor yet child. He has no rights, and more than that, he has no wrongs. In the present condition of things a permission granted to the different denominations to plant missions among the Indians would be given as a privilege, and not conceded as a right. It might be given to-day and taken away to-morrow. We should, for the sake of the Indian, as well as from a sense of interference with our own rights, ask for more than this. That for which we should aim is the recognition of the manhood of the Indian, and of the rights which such manhood confers. We believe that his tribal relations no longer should be recognized, and that he should be treated simply as a citizen, with the full rights of other citizens, and be held amenable to the laws the same as they are. So soon as possible and practicable, with a due regard to the matters involved, the reservation system should be abolished, each Indian being allowed to take up a homestead on the reservation covering his present allotment and home. We advocate that in regard to other matters he be placed in the same condition before the law as the Italian, the Irishman, the Chinaman, or any other immigrant desiring to settle within our territory. In this connection we gratefully recognize the kindly spirit exhibited by the government toward the Indian, and the efforts now being made by it for his education.

Holding these views, the committee, in accordance with the petitions presented in the memorial, recommend, —

1. That the Council declare that in its opinion the system of allotment of Indian agencies to different denominational care — that is, exclusive to all other denominations — inherently is wrong and unjust, both with respect to the rights of the denominations to plant missions wherever it may seem to them obligatory and practical, and with regard to the rights of the Indian to say what shall be the character and the source of his religious instruction.

2. That a committee be appointed by this body to confer with the officers of the American Board, and jointly with them to bring this matter before the proper authorities at Washington.

3. That the churches represented in and by this Council be exhorted to keep the subject of the right of the Indian to himself,

to a home, and to the protection of the law, in the public thought until by statute these rights shall be secured to him.

M. C. HAZARD.
A. H. BRADFORD.
WILLIAM L. BRAY.
EDWARD I. THOMAS.
A. C. BARSTOW.
H. M. HUMPHREY.

REPORT UPON THE PAPER ON CREEDS.

The paper put into the hands of this committee is an able and exhaustive presentation of the subject. It gives a concise and accurate historical sketch of what has been done in the past to indicate and define the Christian doctrines believed and cherished by our American Congregational churches. It sets forth good reasons for attempting, at the present juncture, a restatement of those doctrines, in method and in language adapted to this age and to the phases of doubt and unbelief which now exercise the minds of men throughout Christendom. It also recognizes the distinctive characteristic of our Congregational polity, which forbids the authoritative imposing of a creed upon our churches by this Council, or by any man or body of men. Regarding the paper thus as a timely and valuable contribution and guide to the currents of thought among us, the committee recommend that it be published in full with the minutes of this Council, and that it receive the thoughtful consideration of the churches.

The committee are convinced that the object contemplated in the paper will not be satisfactorily attained by any attempt on the part of this Council directly to formulate a creed or to frame a catechism. But in view of tokens which come in from every quarter of a pressing need and an earnest desire that something be done in this direction, the committee believe that this Council may now very fitly adopt a preliminary measure, with good hope that a satisfactory result will be reached in due time in accordance with our Congregational principles. They therefore recommend that a committee of seven be appointed at this meeting, who shall, as soon as practicable after our adjournment, select, from among the members of our churches in different parts of our land, twenty-five men of piety

and ability, well versed in the truths of the Bible, and representing different shades of thought among us, who may be willing to confer and act together as a commission to prepare, in the form of a creed or catechism, or both, a simple, clear, and comprehensive exposition of the truths of the glorious gospel of the blessed God, for the instruction and edification of our churches.

It is contemplated in this recommendation that the committee of seven will take pains by correspondence to insure the willing cooperation of the men selected in the proposed work; that the commission will be left, without specific instructions from this body, to adopt their own methods of proceeding, and take time as they may find necessary to perfect their work; and that the result of their labors when complete shall be reported, not to this Council, but to the churches and to the world through the public press, to carry such weight of authority as the character of the commission and the intrinsic merit of their exposition of truth may command.

The plan, as it lies in the minds of this committee, is illustrated by the example of those learned and pious men of England and America who have been for some time engaged on a revision of the English translation of the Scriptures. The aim is not to prescribe, but to offer to our churches something which may be worthy of their adoption, and which may come, through such free and voluntary action, to stand by a general and common consensus as the exponent of our doctrines, the symbol of our faith.

Meantime, it is believed that the end will be furthered if, apart from the commission, individual brethren, as they may be moved by the Holy Ghost, will give to the commission and to the public the fruits of their own earnest thinking, in attempts to define what the Scriptures teach as to "what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man."

Respectfully submitted,

A. L. CHAPIN.
S. R. DENNEN.
N. A. HYDE.
J. E. SARGENT.
FRANK P. WOODBURY.
C. D. BARROWS.
D. C. BELL.

REPORT UPON THE PAPER ON THE NEW WEST EDUCATIONAL COMMISSION.

Your committee on the paper of Rev. Dr. F. A. Noble, on "The New West Education Commission," respectfully report: —

We find the paper a clear, vigorous, and timely presentation of one of the most practical questions now pressing for solution at the hands of this Christian people, and we recommend its publication in the minutes of this body, only wishing it were within the province of the Council to put it into such form that it might not only be read from every pulpit, but be placed in the hands of every thinking man in the land.

In regard to the work for which it pleads, — "The Promotion of Christian Civilization in Utah and adjacent States and Territories," — we think the need of the work is not overstated in the paper before us. We heartily agree with its declaration that the evils are gigantic, the peril imminent, and the call for some speedy remedy urgent.

Your committee find "The New West Education Commission" organized for this service.

Upon the question of the need of such an organization we have a strong conviction, —

1. That *some* effective agency for this work is needed *now*.

2. That *such* an agency is needed *now* as will aim directly at the evils and press the remedy vigorously.

3. That owing to the peculiar circumstances under which these evils exist among us, the maintenance of Christian schools is at present the most practicable, and likely to prove the most effective remedy.

We note also the following facts: —

1. That to the men to whom the danger is nearest, and who may be supposed to know it best, the "New West Education Commission" has seemed a necessity.

2. That the commission is already organized and has been in effective operation for more than a year under the control of prudent and far-seeing Christian men, at whose doors the peril stands nearest, but with the hearty approval and co-operation of many of our wisest Christian counsellors all over the land.

3. That the work is being pressed with very great vigor and enthusiasm and with good tokens of success, the operations of the

commission being already upon a basis of $15,000 a year, with the field opening and the practical interest in the work manifestly deepening.

Your committee are in doubt upon only one point; namely, whether we have not already in the American Home Missionary Society, with its new departure in the direction of educational work, an agency adequate to this service, and ready to assume it and press it with all needed vigor? We deprecate the unnecessary multiplication of organizations. The churches want just so many as will make their work most effective; no more. If we have the right agency in the older and more cherished organization, our beloved Home Missionary Society, then we want no other. Your committee are not able to satisfy their own minds upon this point from any facts within their reach; neither do they think it a question upon which this Council are prepared to express an intelligent conviction.

They therefore recommend the adoption of the following resolutions: —

Resolved, 1. That this Council recommend the *New West Education Commission* to confer with the *American Home Missionary Society* with a view to securing from that society the hearty acceptance and vigorous prosecution of the special work for which the commission has been organized.

Resolved, 2. In the event of a failure to secure this result after such conference, that this Council heartily commend the work of the New West Education Commission to the prayers and the practical co-operation of the churches represented in this body.

E. G. BECKWITH.
A. K. PACKARD.
JOS. B. CLARK.
JOHN P. JUBE.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ADDRESS AS TO RELATIONS OF THE CHURCH TO MISSIONS.

Your committee, to whom was referred the eloquent and telling address of Rev. L. T. Chamberlain, D. D., on the "Relations of the Church to Missions," would emphasize especially the following points, as involved in that address: —

1. A deeper realization by the churches of the supernatural character of their commission. This involves the responsibility of the churches *as churches*. The voice of the Holy Ghost is addressed not to missionary boards, but to the churches. No church, not even the youngest and feeblest, can escape the obligation which the Master imposes. While we operate through our great missionary societies, both home and foreign, by the agency of which the work can be most effectively done, it is only as the churches are individually aroused to the woe that rests upon them, as they fail to come up to the help of the Lord, that success will be obtained. Instead, therefore, of suggesting specific amounts to be raised for our benevolent organizations during the next three years, your committee would earnestly recommend that unusual and united effort be made to secure the participation of every church in the great mission work; to induce it to do *something*, and that something the utmost it is able to do toward the fulfilment of the divine command.

2. Your committee deem it of great importance that what the speaker strikingly characterized as "the solidarity of mankind" should be impressed upon the membership of our churches; that it is not home missions or foreign missions, Western missions or Southern missions, but *missions*. The field is the world. All nations are of one blood. They survive or perish together. The home work is not less important than the foreign, nor the foreign than the home. Not until the followers of Christ come with their Master to take the world upon their hearts will the day of power in missions begin.

3. The earnest words of the speaker respecting ministerial responsibility should be prayerfully laid to heart. Your committee painfully feel that perhaps the greatest present obstacle to the progress of the gospel is the failure of the ambassadors of Christ to keep fully and constantly before their people the needs of a dying world. Considerations of ease and supposed personal interest too often prevail with those whom Christ has placed as watchmen upon his

Zion. Their lips are dumb, and the churches remain uninstructed respecting both the need and obligations of missionary effort. If under such circumstances the inactivity of the churches is a crime, how much more so the silence of the angels of the churches!

That these vital considerations, and such as these, may be kept before us, your committee recommend that a copy of the clear and powerful presentation and appeal of Dr. Chamberlain be requested for publication in the minutes.

WM. KINCAID.
A. H. ROSS.
C. S. SMITH.
H. S. BENNETT.
G. HENRY WHITCOMB.

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL: ITS TREASURY.

A SPECIAL effort was made at the meeting in St. Louis to relieve the treasury of the Council of its long-continued embarrassment. The new treasurer gave his note to Dr. Dexter, in settlement of past accounts, for $2,681.71, which is on interest from Nov. 15, 1880, and unpaid bills have since been handed in amounting to $83.34, which makes a debt of $2,765.05.

About half the sum needed has been pledged, and some of it paid in, and it is very desirable that the rest should be raised immediately. The following sums have been paid in or pledged: —

C. G. Hammond, of Chicago, Ill.	$100.00
John Deere, Moline, Ill.	100.00
Charles Benedict, Waterbury, Ct.	100.00
William H. Moore, Hartford, Ct.	100.00
George H. Jones, Newton, Mass.	100.00
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E. D. Holton, Milwaukee, Wis.	50.00
A. L. Chapin, Beloit, Wis.	50.00
J. H. Lockwood, Westfield, Mass.	50.00
F. B. Knowles, Worcester, Mass.	50.00
C. D. Talcott, Talcottville, Ct.	50.00

From this it will be seen that we need about $1,200 more than is now promised to meet the present deficiency in the treasury. We ask the prominent churches and individuals whom God has blest with ample means to send at once to the treasurer such free-will offerings as they may be disposed to make for the honor and efficiency of our national organization. As soon as the requisite sum is received by the treasurer to cancel the present debt, a list of the donors will be made out, with the sums given by each, and sent to all who contribute for this object. A prompt response to this appeal is earnestly requested. Let the honor, integrity, and efficiency of these thirty-six hundred churches be counted by all who can aid in this matter a sufficient motive for doing it at once. All contributions will be thankfully received and promptly acknowledged. Address

REV. LAVALETTE PERRIN, *Treasurer*,
MEMORIAL HALL, HARTFORD, CONN.

CONSTITUTION, BY-LAWS, AND RULES OF ORDER

OF THE

NATIONAL COUNCIL.

CONSTITUTION.

[Adopted Nov. 17, 1871.]

THE Congregational churches of the United States, by elders and messengers assembled, do now associate themselves in National Council: —

To express and foster their substantial unity in doctrine, polity, and work; and

To consult upon the common interests of all the churches, their duties in the work of evangelization, the united development of their resources, and their relations to all parts of the kingdom of Christ.

They agree in belief that the Holy Scriptures are the sufficient and only infallible rule of religious faith and practice; their interpretation thereof being in substantial accordance with the great doctrines of the Christian faith, commonly called evangelical, held in our churches from the early times, and sufficiently set forth by former General Councils.

They agree in belief that the right of government resides in local churches, or congregations of believers, who are responsible directly to the Lord Jesus Christ, the One Head of the Church Universal and of all particular churches; but that all churches, being in communion one with another as parts of Christ's catholic church, have mutual duties subsisting in the obligations of fellowship.

The churches, therefore, while establishing this National Council for the furtherance of the common interests and work of all the churches, do maintain the Scriptural and inalienable right of each church to self-government and administration; and this National Council shall never exercise legislative or judicial authority, nor consent to act as a council of reference.

And, for the convenience of orderly consultation, they establish the following rules: —

I. *Sessions.* — The churches will meet in National Council every third year. They shall also be convened in special session whenever any five of the general State organizations shall so request.

II. *Representation.* — The churches shall be represented, at each session, by delegates, either ministers or laymen, appointed in number and manner as follows: —

1. The churches, assembled in their local organizations, appoint one delegate for every ten churches in their respective organizations, and one for a fraction of ten greater than one half; it being understood that wherever the churches of any State are directly united in a general organization, they may, at their option, appoint the delegates in such body, instead of in local organizations, but in the above ratio of churches so united.

2. In addition to the above, the churches united in State organizations appoint by such body one delegate, and one for each ten thousand communicants in their fellowship, and one for a major fraction thereof: —

3. It being recommended that the number of delegates be, in all cases, divided between ministers and laymen, as nearly equally as is practicable.

4. Such Congregational general societies for Christian work, and the faculties of such theological seminaries as may be recognized by this Council, may be represented by one delegate each, such representatives having the right of discussion only.

III. *Officers.* — 1. At the beginning of every stated or special session there shall be chosen by ballot, from those present as members, a moderator, and one or more assistant moderators, to preside over its deliberations.

2. At each triennial session there shall be chosen by a ballot a secretary, a registrar, and a treasurer, to serve from the close of such session to the close of the next triennial session.

3. The secretary shall receive communications for the Council, conduct correspondence, and collect such facts, and superintend such publications as may from time to time be ordered.

4. The registrar shall make and preserve the records of the proceedings of the Council; and for his aid one or more assistants shall be chosen at each session, to serve during such session.

5. The treasurer shall do the work ordinarily belonging to such office.

6. At each triennial session there shall be chosen a provisional committee, who shall make needful arrangements for the next triennial session, and for any session called during the interval.

7. Committees shall be appointed, and in such manner as may from time to time be ordered.

8. Any member of a church in fellowship may be chosen to the office of secretary, registrar, or treasurer; and such officers as are not delegates shall have all the privileges of members except that of voting.

IV. *By-Laws.* — The Council may make and alter By-Laws at any triennial session.

V. *Amendments.* — This Constitution shall not be altered or amended, except at a triennial session, and by a two-thirds vote, notice thereof having been given at a previous triennial session, or the proposed alteration having been requested by some general State organization of churches, and published with the notification of the session.

DECLARATION OF THE UNITY OF THE CHURCH.

[Adopted in 1871.]

The members of the National Council, representing the Congregational churches of the United States, avail themselves of this opportunity to renew their previous declarations of faith in the unity of the church of God.

While affirming the liberty of our churches, as taught in the New Testament, and inherited by us from our fathers, and from martyrs and confessors of foregoing ages, we adhere to this liberty all the more as affording the ground and hope of a more visible unity in time to come. We desire and purpose to co-operate with all the churches of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the expression of the same catholic sentiments solemnly avowed by the Council of 1865 on the Burial Hill at Plymouth, we wish, at this new epoch of our history, to remove, so far as in us lies, all causes of suspicion and alienation, and to promote the growing unity of counsel and of the effort among the followers of Christ. To us, as to our brethren, "There is one body and one spirit, even as we are called in one hope of our calling."

As little as did our fathers in their day, do we in ours, make a pretension to be the only churches of Christ. We find ourselves consulting and acting together under the distinctive name of Congregationalists; because, in the present condition of our common Christianity, we have felt ourselves called to ascertain and do our own appropriate part of the work of Christ's church among men.

We especially desire, in prosecuting the common work of evangelizing our own land and the world, to observe the common and sacred law, that in the wide field of the world's evangelization, we do our work in friendly co-operation with all those who love and serve our common Lord.

We believe in "the holy Catholic church." It is our prayer and endeavor that the unity of the Church may be more and more apparent, and that the prayer of our Lord for His disciples may be speedily and completely answered, and all be one; that, by consequence of this Christian unity in love, the world may believe in Christ as sent of the Father to save the world.

BY-LAWS.

I. In all its official acts and records, this body shall be designated as THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCHES OF THE UNITED STATES.

II. It shall be understood that the term for which delegates to the Council are appointed expires with each session, triennial or special, to which they are chosen.

III. Persons selected as preachers, or to prepare papers, or to serve upon committees appointed by this body, shall be entitled to seats in the session in which they are to serve, without the privilege of voting.

IV. The term "Congregational," as applied to the general benevolent societies, in connection with representation in this body, is understood in the broad sense of societies whose constituency and control are substantially Congregational.

V. The provisional committee shall consist of seven persons by appointment, with the addition of the secretary, registrar, and treasurer, *ex officiis*. This committee shall specify the place and the precise time at which sessions shall commence; shall choose a preacher of the opening sermon; may select topics regarding the Christian work of the churches, and persons to propose and present papers thereon; shall do any work which shall have been referred to them by the Council; and shall make a full report of all their doings, — the consideration of which shall be the first in order of business after organization.

VI. The sessions shall ordinarily be held in the latter part of October, or the early part of November.

VII. The call for any session shall be signed by the chairman of the provisional committee and the secretary of the Council, and it shall contain a list of topics proposed by the committee; and the secretary shall seasonably furnish blank credentials, and other needful papers, to the scribes of the several local organizations of churches.

VIII. Soon after the opening of a stated or special session, the following committees shall be appointed: —

1. A committee on credentials, who shall prepare a roll of members.

2. A committee of nominations, to nominate all committees not otherwise provided for.

3. A business committee, to propose a docket for the use of the members. Except by special vote of the Council, no business shall be introduced which has not thus passed through the hands of this committee.

Committees shall be composed of three persons each, except otherwise ordered.

IX. In the sessions of the National Council, half an hour shall every morning be given to devotional services, and the daily sessions shall be opened with prayer, and closed with prayer and singing. One evening, at least, shall be entirely set apart for a meeting of prayer and conference; and every evening shall ordinarily be given to meetings of a specifically religious rather than business character. And the Council will join in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at some convenient season.

X. No person shall occupy more than one hour in reading any paper or report, without the unanimous consent of the Council.

XI. An auditor of accounts shall be appointed at every session.

XII. The provisional committee may fill any vacancies occurring in any committee or office in the intervals of sessions, — the person so appointed to serve until the next session.

XIII. The Council approves of an annual compilation of the statistics of the churches, and of a list of such ministers as are reported by the several State organizations. And the secretary is directed to present at each triennial session comprehensive and comparative summaries for the three years preceding.

XIV. The Council will welcome correspondence, by interchange of delegates, with the general Congregational bodies of other lands, and with the general ecclesiastical organizations of other churches of evangelical faith in our land. Delegates will be appointed by the Council in the years of its sessions, and by the provisional committee in the intervening years.

RULES OF ORDER.

The rules of order shall be those found in common parliamentary use, not modified by local legislative practice, with the following explicit modifications: —

When a question is under debate, no motion shall be received, except the following, namely, to amend, to commit, to postpone to a time certain, to postpone indefinitely, to lay on the table, and to adjourn, — which shall have precedence in the reverse order of this list, — the motions to lay on the table and to adjourn alone being not debatable.

No member shall speak more than twice to the merits of any question in debate, except by special permission of the body; nor more than once until every member desiring to speak shall have spoken.

OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL.

Officers for the Session of 1880.

Moderator, Rev. Henry M. Dexter, D. D., Boston, Mass.

Assistant Moderators, Rev. Julian M. Sturtevant, Jr., D. D., Grinnell, Iowa; and Rev. John D. Smith, Shelby Iron Works, Ala.

Secretary, Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., Dover, N. H.

Registrar, Rev. William H. Moore, Hartford, Conn.

Assistant Registrars, Rev. Jesse L. Fonda, Morris, Minn.; and Rev. Warren F. Day, East Saginaw, Mich.

Officers for 1880–1883.

Secretary, Rev. Alonzo H. Quint, D. D., Dover, N. H.

Registrar, Rev. William H. Moore, D. D., Hartford, Conn.

Treasurer, Rev. Lavalette Perrin, D. D., Wolcottville, Conn.

Auditor, Charles Benedict, Waterbury, Conn.

Provisional Committee, 1880–1883.

Chairman, to be appointed; Rev. Constans L. Goodell, D. D., St. Louis, Mo.; Rev. Thomas K. Noble, San Francisco, Cal.; Alfred S. Barnes, New York city; Amos C. Barstow, Providence, R. I.; Charles G. Hammond, Chicago, Ill.; and Gen. Oliver O. Howard, West Point, N. Y.

Special Committees to report in 1883.

Publishing Committee, Charles A. Richardson, Boston, Mass., *Chairman;* the Secretary, the Registrar, the Treasurer, and Rev. Henry A. Hazen, Auburndale, Mass.

Committee to nominate a Committee of Twenty-five to prepare a Declaration of Faith, Rev. Aaron L. Chapin, D. D., Beloit, Wis., *Chairman;* Rev. Charles D. Barrows, Lowell, Mass.; Rev. Stephen R. Dennen, D. D., New Haven, Conn.; Rev. Nathaniel A. Hyde, D. D., Indianapolis, Indiana; Rev. Frank P. Woodbury, Rockford, Ill.; David C. Bell, Minneapolis, Minn.; and Jonathan E. Sargent, LL. D., Concord, N. H.

Regarding a Monument to Rev. John Robinson, Rev. Henry M. Dexter, D. D., Boston, Mass.; Rev. Samuel C. Bartlett, D. D.,

Hanover, N. H.; Rev. GEORGE E. DAY, D. D., New Haven, Conn.; Rev. JOHN K. MCLEAN, Oakland, Cal.; ALFRED S. BARNES, New York city; ELIPHALET W. BLATCHFORD, Chicago, Ill.; and ALPHEUS HARDY, Boston, Mass.

To Correspond with the General Associations of New York and New Jersey, Rev. LYMAN ABBOTT, D. D., New York city; Rev. LEANDER T. CHAMBERLAIN, D. D., Norwich, Conn.; Rev. FREDERICK A. NOBLE, D. D., Chicago, Ill.; Rev. TRUMAN M. POST, D. D., St. Louis, Mo.; and Rev. GEORGE B. SPALDING, D. D., Dover, N. H.

Regarding the recognition of persons virtually Pastors, though not Installed by Council, Rev. ALONZO H. QUINT, D. D., Dover, N. H.; Rev. JOSEPH ANDERSON, D. D., Waterbury, Conn.; Rev. A. HASTINGS ROSS, Port Huron, Mich.; Rev. SYLVESTER D. STORRS, Topeka, Kan.; and Rev. EDWARD F. WILLIAMS, Chicago, Ill.

To present to the National Authorities a protest against "allotment of Indian Agencies to distinct denominational care," Rev. MARK HOPKINS, D. D., LL. D., Williamstown, Mass.; Rev. GEORGE H. ATKINSON, D. D., Portland, Ore.; Rev. MICHAEL E. STRIEBY, D. D., New York city; Rev. JOSEPH WARD, Yankton, Dak.; ELIPHALET W. BLATCHFORD, Chicago, Ill.; NATHANIEL C. DEERING, Osage, Iowa; BENJAMIN DOUGLAS, Middletown, Conn.; and WILLIAM WINDOM, Winona, Minn.

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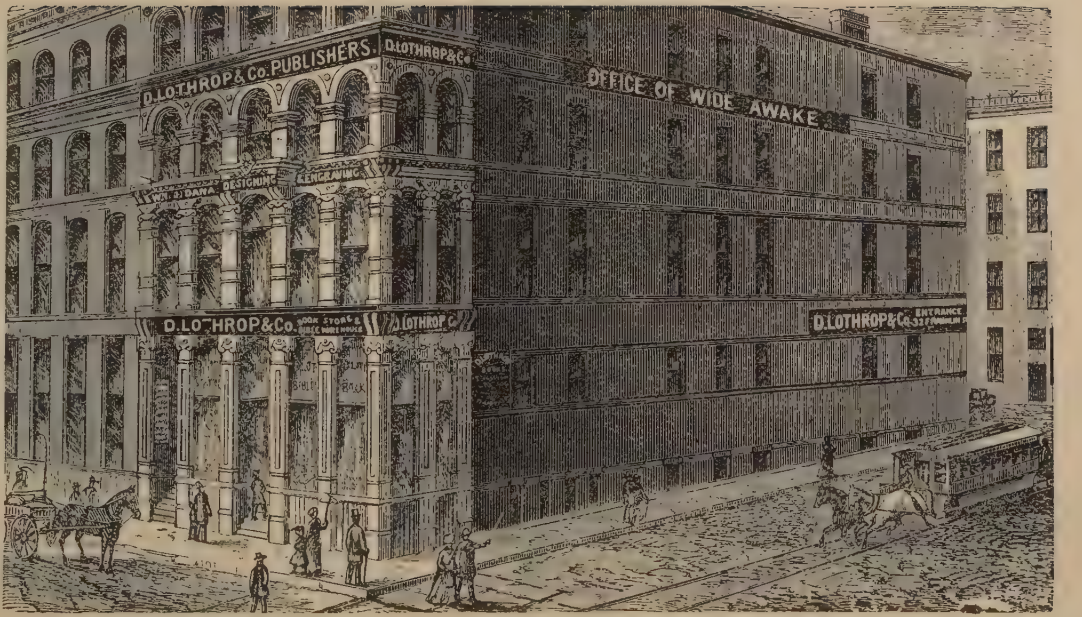

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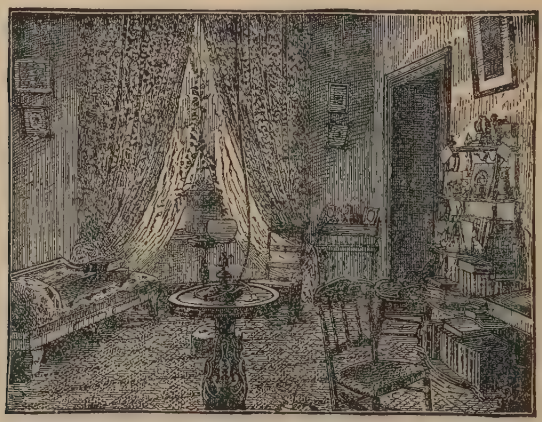

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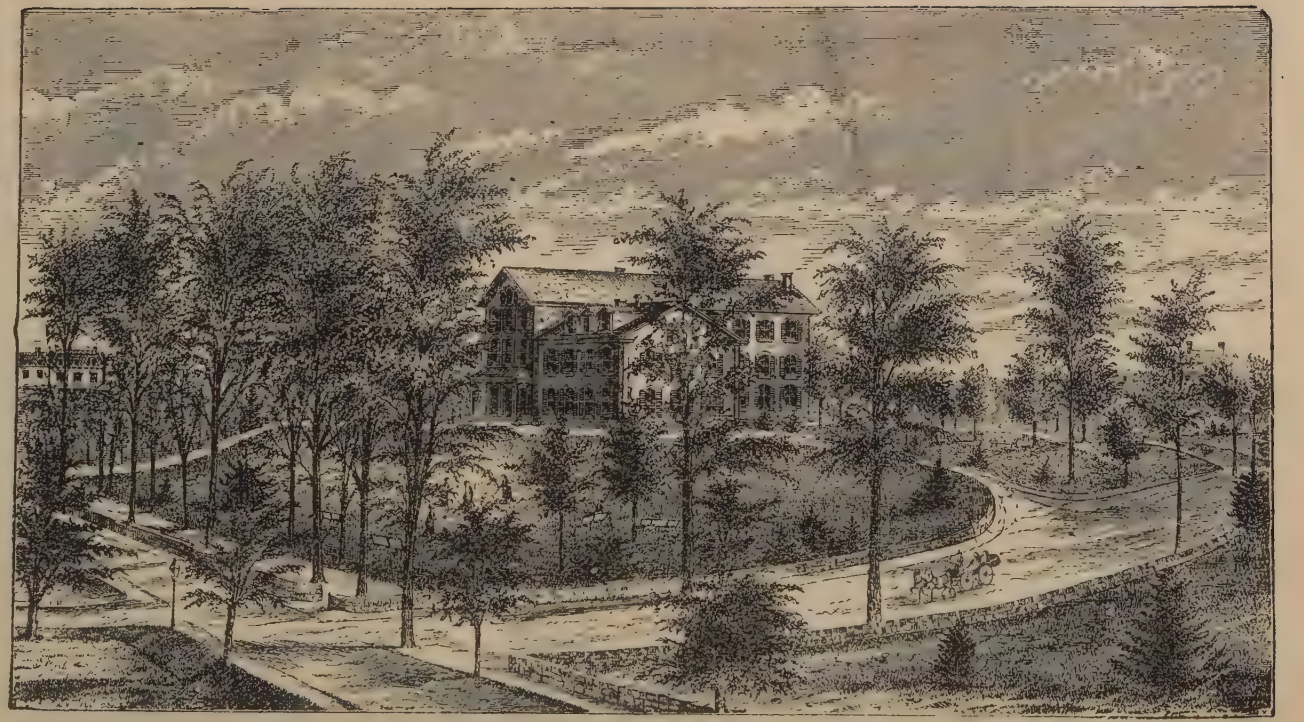

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Our building is open on every side to sun and air; the hours of sleep are long, and the table amply supplied with a variety of well-cooked and palatable food. Our drainage is perfect; we never have any malarious disease, and sickness of any sort is very rare.

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